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Elise Stern Haas
THE APPRECIATION OF QUALITY

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library



Elise Stern Haas
1978

Elise Haas — Arts Patron, Matriarch of S.F. Family

By Dan Levy
Chronicle Staff Writer

Elise Stern Haas, a patron of the arts, civic leader and member of the pioneering San Francisco family that founded and still manages Levi Strauss and Co., died yesterday at Mount Zion Hospital. She was 96.

Mrs. Haas, the widow of Walter A. Haas, was the first woman president of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (formerly the San Francisco Museum of Art) and Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center. She was also a founder of the San Francisco Youth Symphony Association and chairman of the Stern Grove Festival Association, which her parents established.

Mrs. Haas was born in San Francisco in 1893, the only child of Rosalie Meyer and Sigmund Stern. Her father was president of Levi Strauss and Co. and nephew of the company's founder, Levi Strauss, the Bavarian immigrant who founded the firm in 1850.

Remembered yesterday as an elegant, civic-minded philanthropist, Mrs. Haas was a devoted patron of the arts and culture of the city. She was involved with the Museum of Modern Art from its inception in the 1930s. She served on its women's board, the board of trustees, and served as its chairman from 1964 to 1966.

Under her leadership, the museum solidified its financial base and built up its permanent collection. She was herself a painter and sculptor and said she was committed to supporting local artists.

"You've heard the expression *grande dame*," commented San Francisco attorney Moses Lasky, who served with Mrs. Haas on the museum board. "Well, that was what she was. She was one of those people that make a community proud of itself."

Mrs. Haas assumed leadership of the museum at a time when it was struggling financially and unsure of its artistic and civic mission, arts observers said last night.

"She was a strong person with good ideas and excellent taste," said Mary Keestling, who also served as women's board president. "I'm so glad I had the chance to have her in my life."

Mrs. Haas was for many years associated with Mount Zion Hospital, where she served as president from 1938 to 1940. She headed the



ELISE STERN HAAS
Grandniece of Levi Strauss

San Francisco League of Women's Voters, the Visiting Nurse Association and Red Cross blood drives during World War II.

The Haases also made significant contributions to institutions involved in education, health, the environment and social services.

Mrs. Haas and other members of the family received the Alexis de Tocqueville Society Award from the United Way of America in 1965. The citation said that the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, which they founded in 1952, reflected "the family philosophy that wealth is a responsibility and that the sharing of it is a way of life."

In 1914, Elise Stern married Walter A. Haas, who was president of Levi Strauss and Co. from 1928 to 1955. Under their sons, Walter A. Haas Jr. and Peter Haas, the company has become the world's largest apparel manufacturer. Walter A. Haas Jr. is also the owner of the Oakland Athletics baseball team. His son, Walter J. Haas, is president and chief executive officer.

Mrs. Haas leaves her sons, daughter Rhoda Goldman, 10 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at Congregation Emanu-El at Lake Street and Arguello Boulevard in San Francisco.

The family requests that people wishing to make a memorial donation contribute to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Stern Grove Festival Association or Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco.

Ruth Heine Dahl

A memorial is scheduled next week for Ruth Heine Dahl, president of the Heine Piano Co., who died in San Francisco on October 2 at age 91.

Ruth Heine was born in Seattle in 1899. Her father, G. O. Heine, established the Heine Piano Co., which operated a string of West Coast agencies.

She was educated at St. Rose Academy in San Francisco and Stanford University. She married Thomas Dahl Jr. in 1923. For the next 36 years they resided in Hawaii.

In 1960 they returned to San Francisco. She became president of the Heine Piano Co. and operated two local decorators shops.

A service will be held at the Grace Cathedral Chapel at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Contributions may be made to the Lincoln Child Center Foundation, 4368 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland, Calif. 94604; Shriners Hospital or the American Cancer Society.

George A. Scott

La Mesa

George A. Scott, a radar and Navy communications pioneer who served as a navigator for pilot George Bush during World War II, died Sunday at the age of 82.

Associated Press

Robert Tessier

Los Angeles

Actor Robert Tessier, whose baleful looks helped him portray tough guys and villains in such movies as "The Deep" and "The Longest Yard," died October 11 at the age of 56.

Known for his trademark shaved head, Mr. Tessier's first prominent role came in 1970 with "Cry Blood, Apache." Other film credits include "Hooper" and "Hard Times." His last picture was "Night-Wish," released this year.

Associated Press

Fred L. Hartley

Los Angeles

Fred L. Hartley, whose push for innovation and alternative energy boosted Unocal Corp. from a small oil company to an international conglomerate, died yesterday after a long, unspecified illness. He was 73.

Associated Press

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

California Jewish Community Series

Elise Stern Haas

THE APPRECIATION OF QUALITY

With Introductions by
Meyer Friedman, M.D.
and
Henry T. Hopkins

An Interview Conducted by
Harriet Nathan
in 1972

Sponsored by the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum

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TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Elise Stern Haas

PREFACE	i
A PERSONAL NOTE TO MY CHILDREN by Elise Haas	iii
INTRODUCTION by Meyer Friedman, M.D.	v
INTRODUCTION by Henry T. Hopkins	vii
INTERVIEW HISTORY	viii
ANCESTORS AND FAMILY HISTORY	1
The Meyer Family	1
Grandfather Eugene Meyer	2
The Newmark Family	4
Grandmother Harriet Newmark Meyer and Her Children	5
Rosalie Meyer	6
Marriage to Sigmund Stern	7
The Stern Family	8
Residence in San Francisco	10
Birth and Mother's Illness	11
Christian Science	12
Mother's Music and Musical Friends	13
Mother's Accomplishments, Activities and a Gift	14
GIRLHOOD RECOLLECTIONS	17
Home at Pacific and Octavia	17
Some Long-Term Friendships	19
School and Classes	20
The Earthquake Memories: San Francisco and Fair Oaks	22
Homes at Fair Oaks	28
MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN	31
Meeting Walter Haas	31
Decision and a Wedding	33
Walter, Jr.	34
The World War I Years	35
Peter	36
Rhoda	37
Galileo, Deerfield, U.S. and Harvard	38
Miss Godchaux - French and Grammar	40
The 1929 Family Trip to Europe	41
The 1939 Trip	42
Wartime and the Family	45

Peter and Jody	46
Two Generations	47
HOUSEHOLDS AND HOMES	48
The Willis Polk House	48
The Loveliest Lot in Town	48
The Top Apartment	49
Some Eric Mendelsohn Designs	51
CELEBRATIONS, TRAVELS AND INTERESTS	53
Birthdays	53
Sports and the Out-of-Doors	54
"Gloriana" and the Mountbattens	58
Visiting Israel	61
Aspects of Art and Music	66
COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SERVICE	69
Yerba Buena Club, Golden Gate International Exposition	69
The Nomura Luncheon	71
Blood Donor Service: World War II	73
Mt. Zion Hospital	76
U.C. and the Haas International Award	80
Concerts for Young People	82
Merola and the Singers' Competition	84
Stern Grove and the Concerts	85
Maintaining Stern Grove	88
Proposed Center for the Performing Arts	90
THE PRACTICE OF ART	92
Lessons in Painting and Drawing	92
Classes in Sculpture	92
Developing an Art Collection	96
THE STEINS	100
Meeting Sarah and Michael Stein	101
The Matisse Portrait of Sarah	102
The Gentlemen from Gump's	102
Sketches from "Joie de Vivre"	104
"Granny Wants to Sell"	104
A Michael and Sarah Stein Memorial Collection	106
Meeting M. Matisse	106
Nate Cummings and the Portrait of Mike	108
The Elmire Incident	109
Janet Flanner	111
Idea for a Show	112
Visit to Alice Toklas	115
Four Americans in Paris	117

TAKING CARE OF PAINTINGS	120
The Kecks and Conservation	120
Hazards of Lending Paintings	121
Sidelights on Coffelt and O'Keeffe	124
Reproduction of "Femme au Chapeau"	126
HENRY MOORE	128
Some Acquisitions	128
Arranging a Visit with Moore	130
Seeing Moore's Studio and Garden	131
Moore in the U.S.	
ERNEST BLOCH	133
Manuscripts and Lectures at U.C.	134
Letters for the Music Department	134
ALBERT BENDER	138
A Camera for Ansel Adams	139
Tributes Printed by the Grabhorns	139
A Book and Some Clippings	141
The Letters from Mexico	143
DIEGO RIVERA	145
A Fresco for the Country Place	145
The Rivera at Stern Hall	147
MARINO MARINI	150
Some Portraits	150
The Horse Sculpture	150
TRANSITION IN ART, AND THE PROMOTION OF ARTISTS	153
ART MUSEUMS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART	155
Role of the Trustee	155
Disposition of "Femme au Chapeau"	157
The Museum's Rental Gallery	158
The Children's Choice	159
The Question of Communication	160
Searching for a Director	160
Function of a Catalogue	163
Problems of Running a Museum	166
Art Owned in the Bay Area	167
Changing Views of Art and Museums	168
Board Membership	172
The War Memorial Board of Trustees	173
Museum History and Development	174
Fund for the '70s and a Conservation Laboratory	175
Accessions	176
Boards Serving the Museum	177

SOME NOTABLE PRIVATE COLLECTIONS	179
The Barnes Collection	179
Norton Simon's Pictures	180
Edward G. Robinson's Collection	180
Lurçat Tapestries at Home	182
A Tour	183
APPENDICES	187
PARTIAL INDEX	202

PREFACE

The Northern California Jewish Community Series is a collection of oral history interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to Jewish life and to the wider secular community. Sponsored by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, the interviews have been produced by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library. Moses Rischin, professor of history at California State University at San Francisco, is advisor to the series, assisted by the Center's Advisory Committee, Norman Coliver, chairman, Harold M. Edelstein, Seymour Fromer, Mrs. Theodore Geballe, James M. Gerstley, Douglas Goldman, Professor James D. Hart, Louis H. Heilbron, Mrs. Leon Mandelson, Robert E. Sinton, Frank H. Sloss, Daniel Stone, and Mrs. Matt Wahrhaftig. The series was inaugurated in 1967.

In the oral history process, the interviewer works closely with the memoirist in preliminary research and in setting up topics for discussion. The interviews are informal conversations which are tape recorded, transcribed, edited by the interviewer for continuity and clarity, checked and approved by the interviewee, and then final-typed. The resulting manuscripts, indexed and bound, are deposited in the Jesse E. Colman Memorial Library of the Western Jewish History Center, The Bancroft Library, and the University Library at the University of California at Los Angeles. By special arrangement copies may be deposited in other manuscript repositories holding relevant collections. Related information may be found in earlier interviews with Lawrence Arnstein, Amy Steinhart Braden, Adrien J. Falk, Alice Gerstle Levi-son, Jennie Matyas, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, and Mrs. Simon J. Lubin. Untranscribed tapes of interviews with descendants of pioneer California Jews conducted by Professor Robert E. Levinson are on deposit at The Bancroft Library and the Western Jewish History Center.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in recent California history. The Office is under the administrative supervision of Professor James D. Hart, the director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum
Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

31 May 1978
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CALIFORNIA JEWISH COMMUNITY INTERVIEW SERIES

- Rinder, Rose (Mrs. Reuben R.), Music, Prayer, and Religious Leadership: Temple Emanu-El, 1913-1969. 1971
- Koshland, Lucile Heming (Mrs. Daniel E., Sr.), Citizen Participation in Government. 1970.
- Koshland, Daniel E., Sr., The Principle of Sharing. 1971.
- Hilborn, Walter S., Reflections on Legal Practice and Jewish Community Leadership: New York and Los Angeles, 1907-1973. 1974.
- Magnin, Rabbi Edgar F., Leader and Personality. 1975.
- Fleishhacker, Mortimer, and Janet Choynski (Mrs. Mortimer), Family, Business, and the San Francisco Community. 1975.
- Haas, Walter A., Sr. Civic, Philanthropic, and Business Leadership. 1975.
- Haas, Elise Stern (Mrs. Walter, Sr.), The Appreciation of Quality. 1975. In process.
- Salz, Helen Arnstein (Mrs. Ansley), Sketches of An Improbable Ninety Years. 1975.
- Sinton, Edgar, Jewish and Community Service in San Francisco, A Family Tradition. 1978.
- Kuhn, Marshall H., Marshall H. Kuhn: Catalyst and Teacher; San Francisco Jewish and Community Leader, 1934-1978. 1978.

Related information may be found in other Regional Oral History Office interviews: Lawrence Arnstein, Amy Steinhart Braden, Adrien J. Falk, Alice Gerstle Levison (Mrs. J.B.), Jennie Matyas, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Mrs. Simon J. Lubin, Harold L. Zellerbach; Bay Area Foundation History series; The Petaluma Jewish Community series (interviews conducted by Kenneth Kann); California Women Political Leaders series--Ann Eliaser, Elinor Raas Heller, Carmen Warschaw, Rosalind Wyman; Dr. Rubin Lewis, (chest surgeon); James D. Hart (fine printing); Maynard Jocelyn (wine technology); Ruth Hart (volunteer leader). Untranscribed tapes of interviews with descendants of pioneer California Jews conducted by Professor Robert E. Levinson are on deposit in The Bancroft Library and the Western Jewish History Center.

A PERSONAL NOTE TO MY CHILDREN

Beauty and quality have been, quite unconsciously, the guidelines that shaped my attraction to people and to material things. Integrity needs no mention; it is all-important. My lovely mother was the spiritual and physical embodiment of these three attributes. She had an enormous influence on my life--too much, really--and it took me years after my marriage to "get out from under" and be my own individual self. It was years, too, when I was really "grown-up" to get to know and appreciate my father. I had always loved him dearly, as he did me, but though he indulged me whenever he was allowed to, he left my upbringing entirely to my mother. He was in almost every way her opposite: short in stature, jolly, outgoing, fun-loving, gay and lovable. Mother was sweet and loving too--and very thoughtful of people--but so regal in bearing that she was somewhat intimidating, and she had no sense of humor, which Dad had in abundance.

I am not of the gregarious type. I have had few really intimate friends in my life, but these have meant more to me than I can express. I loved them dearly. I grew up, an only child, in a large, formal house, never allowed to go out unaccompanied and later, never to have a date alone with a boy nor stay overnight with a friend except my then "best friend," Marian Walter (Sinton). My only "boy-girl" date was to go to a U.C.-Stanford trackmeet with Walter Haas, my constant dinner partner after I had made my debut in 1912--and you all know the result of that.

Being by nature and inheritance a "loner," you can imagine the adjustment I had to make when I married into the enormous, tumultuous Koshland clan, to some of whom I later became very close. They were never happy without constant companionship. I used to think they couldn't even take a bath without company.

I am a great believer in the benefit of having good genes, and in this, Dad and I have been most fortunate. I don't think I have spoken much about our marriage. I think two people could not have more different tastes and interests. I have always particularly wished that Walter could enjoy music with me, but he hates every note, whether it be jazz or symphony. To my great surprise, only two days ago he said to me, "I'm really sorry that I was never taught more about music and the things you enjoy. All that went to my dear sister Ruth." For how many years this had been my wish, too!

On my part, I learned to fish because Walter loved it, and I soon learned to love it too, not do it too badly, and enjoy the beautiful wild country it took us to, although sleeping on the ground was not the pleasantest experience for me. Being in the wilds was a wonderful experience I had never had before.

You all know your father well, but I want to tell those who come after, what an extraordinary man he was. He has a brilliant mind, a great compassion for people, the sweetest nature I know, and our joy together could not have been surpassed, however different we are.

It has taken me a long time to write this so-called memoir--over three years, I think--so you will find discrepancies in dates and details, but it will give you an idea of the life of a girl without brothers and sisters, but with a few very choice friends, whose life up to this moment (February 1977) has been as happy a one as I can possibly imagine.

In the meantime, some of the grandchildren have married and have children of their own, so we are now great-grandparents, which is really impressive. I hope and pray that the lives of all of them may be as happy as ours has been. The world and its standards have changed a great deal, but I can see no change of that sort in our descendants.

This autobiography which you, my children, wanted has taken a long time. Harriet Nathan has been more than helpful and I cannot be grateful enough for her patience. I must admit it has been fun, too, to have long-past things come to the surface. I have probably left out a great deal, but anyhow, things can become too long.

I have enjoyed doing it and I hope you will enjoy reading it. With all my love,

Your Mother

INTRODUCTION

Most knowledgeable physicians in the United States recognize that the Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center is one of the nation's top dozen community medical centers. This is because the quality of compassionate care this hospital affords its patients; the distinguished attending, house officer and nursing staff it possesses; the profusion of superb diagnostic and therapeutic modalities it harbors and last, but far from least, the research it sustains, make such recognition an inescapable fact.

But just four decades ago, this same hospital was a relatively tiny, rather understaffed and under-equipped neighborhood sort of institution which was run as an ordinary run-of-the-mill hospital. What then made this parochial hospital soar to its contemporary national esteem? Perhaps many forces have been at work but as an interested witness of the scene throughout these same forty nascent years, I believe the initial, and certainly the most seminal forces seeming to enhance the caliber of this hospital were those initiated by Elise Haas when she assumed the presidency of the Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center in 1938.

From the very outset, Elise Haas distinguished herself from all her predecessors. First, she dared to believe that a hospital was not a place of business but was above all a prime symbol of a community's spiritual concern and compassion for its fellow members. And Elise Haas never allowed any hospital financial report, whether it was favorable or unfavorable to obliterate this concept. It was this same belief that probably inspired her to found a full-time psychiatry department at the hospital. Strange as it may seem now, this was a rather revolutionary development four decades ago.

Elise Haas also differed from her predecessors by daring to dream that the hospital she took over might some day become a distinguished medical center of national repute. But for this to happen, she sensed that medical research must serve as an indispensable leavening agent for such a development. She accordingly, with total intrepidity, proceeded to install research as a going concern at the hospital. So when she retired as president of the hospital in 1940, she left it possessing an institute for heart research and laboratories in which dozens of other individual investigators were able to conduct research in cancer, edocrinology, surgery, neurology and psychiatry. She had accomplished this feat almost singlehandedly because at that time there wasn't a single federal dollar available for medical research.

Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center then in its contemporary acquisition

of national esteem has made Elise Haas's dream come true. But this dream has materialized only because she had the vision, the courage and the unswerving determination and drive to make that dream evolve from fantasy to fact. I have known few, very few, Americans whose past contains such a stellar accomplishment.

Meyer Friedman, M.D.
Director Emeritus
Harold Brunn Institute
Mount Zion Hospital and
Medical Center
San Francisco

January 1979

INTRODUCTION

One would wish that Elise Stern Haas would take more time away from her self-imposed family and philanthropic duties to pursue her own creative development as a sculptor. If the small, existing body of work was larger, more definitive, one wouldn't need words to identify the personality traits which describe this remarkable woman.

She would insist that her modest sculptures are those of an amateur but I would insist that they are not amateurish. They are based on a solid knowledge and understanding of art and cultural history and reflect a respect for the process of creating, its mystery, and its discipline, which only a real artist intuitively comprehends. They, as their maker, exude a nice feeling for simplicity of form, a reserved dignity and human warmth.

It is true that Elise Haas was early blessed with the opportunity to travel and to study the work of European masters but it is also true that she was drawn to the artists of her own era, the modernists Matisse, Braque and Picasso, rather than those of earlier times. She was also blessed with the opportunity to acquire loved objects which were to her taste, many of which have, with the patina of time, turned out to be masterworks of the first order. Her esthetic affinities drew her toward the painting and sculpture of Matisse but her "eye" continued to expand to include Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Jean Arp, Andre Masson, Marino Marini, and even reached out to support younger artists from the Bay Area such as Mark Adams and Bruce Beasley.

Fortunately for the many rather than the few, her cultural interests spilled over into the public arena where her name has become almost synonymous with the evolution and development of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She served for many years on the Women's Board, later became a museum trustee, and eventually served as its President. Even today she rarely misses a meeting. Over the years her contributions have been many but her foresightedness is best exemplified by two events: her efforts, with friends, to establish the first museum endowment fund which has now tripled in size and her single-handed development and support of the museum painting conservation laboratory which has become one of the best in the nation.

Simplicity, dignity, human warmth and a woman's determination which pre-dates any movement characterize the life and the art of Elise Stern Haas.

Henry T. Hopkins
Director,
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

January 1979

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Place: The Haas's family residence in San Francisco, at 2100 Pacific Avenue, usually in the library.

Dates:	Interview I	February 17, 1972
	Interview II	February 25, 1972
	Interview III	March 3, 1972
	Interview IV	March 17, 1972
	Interview V	March 24, 1972
	Interview VI	March 31, 1972
	Interview VII	April 7, 1972

After transcription, the pages were lightly edited and submitted to Mrs. Haas for her review and approval. A skilled writer and editor, Elise Haas then rewrote portions, and reorganized and supplemented the original interview materials. Periodic conferences and consultations with the interviewer continued through 1978, when the process was completed.

Duration: Sessions usually began about 10:30 a.m. and continued for one and a half to two hours.

As Elise Haas talked in the informal library of her San Francisco apartment or the green and white garden of her Atherton home, her composure and grace suggested a world of repose. But her world has become far larger and more challenging than her setting implied, and she has brought to it discipline, taste, and generosity laced with wit and an eye for the ridiculous.

She spoke of her family with pride that embraced forebears, contemporaries, and descendants. She recalled that her family members had given distinguished service to France for several generations, and recounted the ways in which the Meyer family, the Sterns, and the Haases had played leading roles in the nation's and California's civic life, with her "beautiful and accomplished" mother, Rosalie Meyer Stern, carrying on the tradition. Meanwhile she herself, as a well brought up young lady of the era married young and happily, delighted in her three children, accepted sometimes heavy family responsibilities, ran households and remained an essentially private person.

When her mother died, Elise Haas was thrust into leadership of the operation of Sigmund Stern Grove and the Grove concerts established by her mother as a gift for the people of San Francisco. But for some years she had already shown her skill in community affairs.

As time went by, Mrs. Haas regarded with some surprise her own emergence as a civic leader and pioneer (terms she never applied to herself). She led recruitment for San Francisco's blood donor program in World War II; launched the children's concerts at the San Francisco Symphony; and became the first woman president of Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco where she fostered development of a distinguished research institute. She was also the nation's first woman president of an art museum--the San Francisco Museum of Art, now the Museum of Modern Art--where she stimulated the development of a conservation laboratory and workshop. As she spoke knowledgeably of these responsibilities, she analyzed the politics of organizations and the relationships between staff and lay boards, the problems of search committees, budgets, conflicting interests and competing claims, the pressures and demands of a stimulating and urgent world.

Sometimes commenting on a picture or sculpture, Mrs. Haas recalled being taught as a child to analyze paintings and drawings and to appreciate art. Cultivating understanding and selecting those examples that most appeal to her personal taste became a lifelong fascination, both for her private collection and her more public activities. She waved away the title of "collector" or "expert," but her comments on each work of art in her home were analytical, thoughtful, and filled with joy.

One day as she turned through the cards carrying details of acquisitions, she glanced up with suppressed laughter and recalled looking at such a card for a Matisse drawing. Her note said, "acquired from M. Elmire," a dealer who had come to her highly recommended, and who was later revealed as the notorious Elmire de Hory. Along with a distinguished collection that includes Matisse's "Femme au Chapeau" she keeps the Elmire fake on her wall, points out the lesson to visitors, and amuses herself with speculating on how Matisse himself might have done that same drawing.

In her own work, developing talent as a sculptor, writing a letter defending a hospital's fiscal policies, organizing a team of volunteers, or arranging a convivial and elaborate birthday celebration for her husband, her performance has been consistently elegant. With her clear dark glance, she became adept at recognizing excellence in artists and musicians, researchers and writers, the creative and the expert. In her view, it was only natural to cultivate that quality wherever she found it, and to help it flourish.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer-Editor

Spring 1979
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ANCESTORS AND FAMILY HISTORY

Haas: I would like our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren (we have acquired our first three: Jennifer Haas, Simone Grace Haas and Daniel Stern Haas) to know something of their forebears. I will start with my mother's side, since I know more about them than about my father's family.

The genealogical table of my mother's family I can trace to the early 18th century. My mother was Rosalie Meyer, my father, Sigmund Stern, both of whom you all remember, my father more dimly perhaps since he died in 1928. My mother lived until 1956 and knew all her ten great-grandchildren.

The Meyer Family

Haas: And now, to begin. The Meyer family had lived in Alsace, France, for many generations. The first record we have is of "Jacob Meyer, Grand Rabbin et Président du Consistoire Israelite du Bas Rhin. He was born in 1701 and died at the age of 92 after a long, virtuous life, beloved by all." This is part of the inscription on a large impressive black marble tombstone in the old Jewish cemetery of Strasbourg which Walter and I visited in 1950 or 1952. I placed some lilies of the valley at its base in the pouring rain. This monument must have been erected by the Jewish townspeople after World War II, for the old Jewish cemetery had been desecrated and destroyed by the Nazis.

The Grand Rabbi's career was indeed a great one. He and the Congress of Jewish Notables (the Sanhedrin) had been summoned to Paris by Napoleon I to discuss the status of the Jews in France. Through these deliberations, the French Jews were granted all the rights of French citizens, provided they gave up their own national character as a separate entity. They could continue to practice their religion according to the Torah. The Emperor bestowed upon

Haas: Jacob Meyer the Distinguished Order of "Officier de la Légion d'Honneur," the first Jew ever to wear the Red Ribbon. Long years later, my grandfather was made an "Officier" and later a "Chevalier" of the Legion of Honor.

The original parchment documents of these honors are in the care of the Judah Magnes Museum. In addition, my mother later wore the Red Ribbon, as did her sisters Elise and Florence, her brother Eugene and her brother-in-law, George Blumenthal. All of them had led distinguished lives and had done much for France as well as for their own country, the United States.

Grandfather Eugene Meyer

Haas: My mother's father, my grandfather, Eugene Meyer, was born in Strasbourg on January 27, 1842.* He was the eldest son of Isaac and Sephora Loeb Meyer, both natives of Strasbourg. They had two daughters, one of whom, Ernestine, married Léon Zadoc-Kahn of Mommenheim, who later was to become the Grand Rabbi of France. He was a handsome, kind, distinguished man, whom I dimly remember--perhaps only from his photographs. Isaac Meyer had been educated as a rabbi, but had to turn to business to support his family. He died at sixty, apparently of appendicitis.

Much of the following, I have learned from Mr. Merlo Pusey's biography of my uncle, Eugene Meyer, Jr. Sephora, to support her children, opened a shop in her home for the sale of white flour to Jews for their Sabbath bread. Modern milling was in its infancy, so the much prized white flour could be obtained only in Germany. As a boy (he was only eight and a half years old when his father died), Eugene had to haul flour from Kehl, Germany for his mother's shop. His sisters obtained jobs in dry goods stores, while his younger brother Constant, as soon as he was old enough, became a monitor in the training school for silversmiths. Eugene himself had remained three years at the École Normale and then studied mathematics, geometry, logarithms, geography, chemistry, physics, French and German at the Gymnase Protestant. To this had been added the usual religious instruction, including Hebrew. These many studies show what great value the Jews all through the centuries have placed on education. Eugene also had some training in music, but his ambition to become a music teacher had to be put aside for economic reasons.

*See an article by Eugene Meyer, edited by Norton B. Stern, "My Early Years," in the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly, vol. V, no. 2 (January 1973).

Haas: Earlier, when the family moved to 14 Rue St. Hélène opposite the synagogue, Eugene would often accompany his father on the Sabbath, carrying his prayer books for him and listening proudly when his father blew the shofar at the services. Until I read this in Mr. Pusey's biography, I knew nothing specific about my grandfather's religious ties to Judaism.

Many, many years later when my grandfather and his family lived in New York, I remember that none of the family went to synagogue nor observed our Holy Days. However, when my uncle Walter Meyer went to Paris in 1918, he met Chaim Weizmann, accompanied the Weizmann Committee to Palestine and became a confirmed Zionist. This, however, he never discussed with his family.

To go back: At the age of 14, Eugene left school for a job at L. and N. Blum. He earned 50 or 60 francs for the support of his family. In a few months he was keeping the books and carrying on the firm's correspondence in French and German.

Nathan: He advanced rapidly, didn't he?

Haas: Yes. Then and in future endeavors, as you will see. While working for the Blums he heard tales about America and the many opportunities it offered. In spite of his reluctance to leave his native land and his family, especially his mother, who was heartbroken at his decision, he left, first for Paris, where he met Alexandre Lazard of the firm of Lazard Frères who gave him a letter of introduction to Alexandre Weill of Lazard Frères in San Francisco.

In September 1859, he sailed from New York, where he waited two weeks for a steamer through the Isthmus of Panama. Twenty-four days later, he was in San Francisco. He continued his contacts with Simon Lazard and Alexandre Weill with whom he often dined. I am sure these dinners were welcome, as he had little money and few friends.

Nathan: Did he look for a position?

Haas: Yes, indeed. Lazard Frères got him a job as a clerk. When the firm where he worked dissolved after a year, he had managed to save \$1500. He then decided to go to Los Angeles with Sol Lazard who needed a clerk in his store.

Eugene arrived in Los Angeles by stage coach in 1861 [?]. He was sharply disappointed by this "one mule town," to quote Mr. Pusey, and decided he would not remain for more than 48 hours.

Nathan: What caused him to change his mind?

Haas: I suppose he got acquainted with some of the few Yankees and foreigners there, for he soon became interested in this frontier town. He was invited, within a month, to join the French Benevolent Society. He later became its secretary and treasurer and then its president for six years. As I said before, he advanced rapidly in anything he undertook. He also became consular agent for France. The official parchment of this appointment is at the Judah Magnes Museum.

Eugene learned Spanish so he could communicate with the Mexicans. He was greatly trusted, and people began leaving their money with him for safekeeping. He kept it in an iron safe with only a lock and key. He put a bar on his door and a double-barrelled gun under his bed.

For a man who had come to California with nothing, who had refused loans from his brothers and brother-in-law for ship passage and come 3rd class, Eugene prospered, due to his brains, honesty and hard work. He was able to purchase several pieces of land in downtown Los Angeles, which, if he had not later sold, would probably have brought him more than he earned in a lifetime of hard work. (Mr. Pusey again.)

Nathan: Was his life in Los Angeles all work?

Haas: Not quite. On November 20th, 1867 he married Miss Harriet Newmark, whose father, Joseph Newmark,* performed the ceremony. The reception was held at the Bella Union Hotel. Harriet was sixteen, having been engaged at fifteen to Kaspar Cohn. Girls were scarce in Los Angeles in those days. Eugene and Harriet set up residence in an old adobe house, which later became noted for having a nameplate "Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Meyer" on the front door. A silver one, I think.

The Newmark Family

Nathan: Who was Joseph Newmark?

Haas: He was my grandmother's father, born June 15, 1799 in the Prussian town of Neumark. Later, the name was Anglicized to Newmark. Joseph

*Many details of Joseph Newmark's early life, largely spent in the Polish town of Brodnik, as well as his early activities in the U.S.A., can be found in an article about his son, Myer Joseph Newmark, in the April 1970, v. II, no. 3 issue of the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly.

Haas: Newmark came to New York in 1824. The next year, he helped to establish and was a charter member of B'Nai Jeshurum, the first Ashkenazim congregation in New York. It was soon known as the Elm Street Synagogue. Records show that he had exceptionally extensive Jewish knowledge. He later became a lay rabbi, and as such, officiated at the marriage of each of his five daughters. He spent a time in Somerset, Connecticut, and joined the Masonic order there, becoming a Master Mason in January 1831.

He soon returned to New York City where, on February 3, 1834, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. In 1835 in New York, he married Rosa Levy, who was born in London in 1808. Joseph Newmark left for San Francisco in 1851 and on December 18, 1852, Rosa and their six children left the East Coast to join him. They came by ship around the Horn in April 1853. Their son, Myer Newmark, kept a journal of the trip.

In time, other members of the Newmark family joined them in Los Angeles, traveling overland. Harris Newmark, Harriet's cousin, wrote My Sixty Years in California, which holds much of interest to early Californians.

Grandmother Harriet Newmark Meyer and Her Children

Nathan: Now shall we go back to Harriet Newmark, who had married Eugene Meyer?

Haas: Yes. When Harriet was 17, she gave birth to my mother, Rosalie. The parents were both so young that they used to wake the baby up at night to play with her. By the time my "Grannie" was thirty-two, she had eight children. She brought all of them to maturity, which was unusual in those days. Her sisters had twelve and thirteen children, but many of them died young.

Nathan: What were the names of your aunts and uncles?

Haas: My mother was Rosalie, then came Elise, after whom I was named, then Florence, who had superb taste and designed her own clothes, which, like her sisters' dresses, were made by the family seamstress, Polly Wormser. Florie wore everything "hot from the needle." Then came Eugene, Ruth, Aline, Walter and Edgar. They grew up, all of them, to be unusually handsome. Five of them had my grandfather's straight, slender nose--the famous "Meyer nose"--and the rest resembled my grandmother who was rather petite. They were all individualistic, bright and independent.

Haas: Edgar, however, was not cut according to the family pattern. He also was bright but gentler and more outgoing, with a sense of fun and humor, which the others lacked. He was less than ten years older than I and I adored him. He went down on the Titanic in 1912, after putting his wife into a lifeboat and was last seen running toward the stern of the ship. He was so young--only twenty-eight.

Nathan: Did he leave any children?

Haas: One little two-year-old, Jane, who married George Stern of New York, and is, I think, a grandmother.

Nathan: Speaking again of your grandparents, Harriet and Eugene Meyer, how long did they live in Los Angeles?

Rosalie Meyer

Haas: After twenty-two years there, my grandfather moved to San Francisco. That was on January 1, 1884. His San Francisco friends, some of whom were returning to Paris, persuaded him to take charge of their banking operations, which were put into an English corporation, the London, Paris and American Bank Ltd. of London. I think it nearly broke my mother's heart to leave all her cousins and friends. She was twelve at the time and it could not have been easy to make new friends at that age in a new community.

At sixteen, she had to leave high school because her mother suffered a nervous breakdown. My mother took charge of the household and did her best to bring up seven young hellions. "What a handful they were," she used to tell me. "Once when I was chasing Eugene (her brother) around the table to thrash him, he put out his foot to trip me, and there I was, flat on the floor. How he laughed!"

Nathan: She must not have had an easy time of it.

Haas: No. She had many responsibilities, but she never complained. She had a very great sense of duty, as you will learn later.

Nathan: She must have been a remarkable person.

Haas: She was, indeed, and beautiful beyond belief. She had a high and noble forehead, deep-set dark eyes under arched eyebrows and the beautiful chiselled Meyer nose. In fact, she was a replica of her father in a very feminine way. I remember him as a tall, handsome, aristocratic and somewhat intimidating man, while my grandmother was small, gentle, with a little upturned nose.

Haas: Mother made her debut when she was eighteen, I think. In those days there were a great many balls. She had many admirers. One young man, good-looking and cultivated, danced with her a great deal. They were interested in the same things and soon they became engaged. My grandfather, like the good practical Frenchman that he was, went to this young man's uncle to ask whether his nephew could support a wife. "He doesn't know a nickel from a dime," was the frank and disconcerting reply.

Nathan: What happened then?

Haas: Well, my grandfather spoke to my mother, repeated this and said, "My dear Rosalie, I shall have to ask you to break the engagement. I have four other daughters to bring up and three sons to educate and I have not the means to support you and your husband as well. Besides, I think you are too proud to wish me to do so." So mother dutifully did as her father requested. With her usual dignity and reticence, the only clue to her feelings was a phrase I found in a diary after her death. She referred to "the tragic event of last year."

Nathan: That was a sad experience.

Marriage to Sigmund Stern

Haas: Some time later, my grandfather took mother and my Aunt Elise to Paris, I suppose to divert her mind and perhaps her heart. He deposited the two girls with his brother-in-law, the Grand Rabbi of France, Léon Zadoc-Kahn and his wife, Tante Ernestine. Rosalie and Elise got to know their French cousins and their friends, and eventually met my father, Sig Stern, a San Franciscan ten years older than mother. He fell deeply in love with her. Perhaps the past was too fresh, and she did not at first respond. When she finally accepted his proposal of marriage, he gave her a huge diamond solitaire ring. She was so embarrassed by its size that she used to carry it around in her pocket.

Nathan: How lovely.

Haas: Madame Alexandre Weill, a family friend, was quite appalled and said, "My dear Rosalie, you may get a hole in your pocket and no more ring."

Nathan: Were your parents married in Paris?

Haas: No. I imagine they all returned to San Francisco fairly soon after the engagement. Dad and mother were married October 3, 1892, at my grandparents' home on Pine Street. I don't remember the number but I

Haas: do have a picture of the altar. It was placed in front of a lace-curtained bay window, with a large photograph of the Grand Rabbi pinned to the curtain. This lent a special distinction to the ceremony. One of my grandmother's sisters wrote a full description of the wedding and of the presents to another sister. This letter, as well as many other letters, pictures and documents are now in the Judah Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California.

The Stern Family

Nathan: I see. Now, can you tell me something of your father's family?

Haas: Unfortunately, I know very little about my father's family. The first member to come to this country was his uncle, Levi Strauss, whose first name has become famous. Interestingly enough, in the June 18, 1972 Levi's Letter (house organ of Levi Strauss & Co.) there appeared the following article:

Historical Find in Excavation

The Levi Strauss headquarters building under excavation in Embarcadero Center was the site for much excitement last month as diggers unearthed historical mementos of the Gold Rush era.

The remains of what was known as the Long Wharf was found buried in the soil. Many of the pine pilings, some of them 70 feet long, were driven into what was then the Bay in the summer of 1849 when construction of the Wharf was started. But rapid filling of the Bay in 1850 caused one end of the pier to become part of the mainland and forgotten in the pages of history.

It wasn't until the excavation of the new Levi's building that this ancient pier was discovered. The finding offers clues to how and when Levi arrived in San Francisco. With all the company's early records destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire, Strauss' arrival date has only been assumed to be in 1850, with no clue as to where. Now there's a strong possibility that Levi may have disembarked from his New York voyage on the same ground that 120 years later was to be the site of his new company headquarters.

Examination of several volumes titled "San Francisco Ship & Passenger Lists" revealed that six persons with the name of Strauss or Straus arrived in San Francisco by ship from early 1850 to mid 1892. However, only one name has the first initial "L".

Haas:

Though the surname of this passenger was spelled Straus, not Strauss, sloppy spelling habits in the gold rush days may account for the discrepancy. The arrival of L. Straus (s) is also listed in the January 28, 1852 edition of the Alta California newspaper, under ship and passenger arrivals of the previous day. Thus, there is strong chance that this passenger is our man.

We know Levi came to San Francisco aboard a small side-wheel steamer, the Ohio, which probably came around Cape Horn and stopped in various Pacific ports. With the filling of the bay having proceeded as far as it did by early 1852, a small ship like the Ohio (41 passengers and cargo) was likely to moor at the Long Wharf where the water was shallow. Such possibility gives us another remarkable indication that the Long Wharf, on January 27, 1852, was Levi's point of disembarkment.

The story goes that as Levi was walking along the wharf, he noticed a huge bale of blue canvas lying there. He bought it, intending to use it for making tents for the Gold Rush miners. In a saloon one day, he met a miner, Alkali Ike by name, who started to complain that his pants wore out because mining was tough on them. Levi got an inspiration. He took Ike to a tailor, who then and there cut a pair of pants for him, using Levi's blue canvas. This material, which came "de Nimes" (from Nimes, France) was later called "denim." A few weeks later, Ike came back to San Francisco to meet Levi and said, "The pants are fine; they wear like iron, but hell, the pockets tear when I stuff the gold ore in 'em."

Another inspiration. Levi took the pants to a shoemaker and had a copper rivet stamped at each corner of each pocket. And so the famous Levi's were born!

Levi's sister Rosa became the second wife of David Stern. They had eight children. The three daughters were Lillie Stern Scholle, Hattie Stern Heller and Blanche Stern Bachman. When four of the sons were grown, Levi took them into Levi Strauss & Co. The eldest was Jacob, Madeleine Russell's grandfather, then came my father, Sigmund Stern, then Louis and Abraham. A son, Henry, died young. Abraham later married my mother's sister Elise. Sadly, he died after they had sixteen years of great happiness together. They had one surviving child, John David Stern. Many years after Abe's death, Elise moved to Paris and later married Luis de Souza -Dantas, ambassador from Brazil to France. They had a beautiful little house near Les Invalides. Elise, like many others in the Meyer family, had exquisite taste. The house was a gem.

As for Walter's family, his parents were Abraham and Fannie Koshland Haas. His sisters were Ruth, who married Philip N. Lilienthal, Jr., and Eleanor, who married her cousin, Dan Koshland.

Haas: She died after twenty-seven years of multiple sclerosis, the longest case then on record. I was particularly devoted to her, although she cried when she learned that her beloved brother was engaged to be married!

Nathan: Thinking again about your father's family, can you describe them?

Haas: My Stern grandparents died before I was born. (I was born on October 29, 1893.) Of their four sons, Jacob, the oldest, was cultivated, reserved and serious. He collected paintings, mainly of the Barbizon School. Sig, my father, was rather short, lively, easy to know, and had many friends. After I married, he adored Walter as though he were his own son. Abe, who married my Aunt Elise, did not pay much attention to the business but preferred to drive his horse and sully in Golden Gate Park. He, too, was full of fun as were my father and my Aunt Elise. Louis Stern became the New York representative of the firm. He was something of an invalid and as he could not stand the heat of New York in summer, he and his wife used to go to Europe. This was a boon for my mother.

Nathan: Why was that?

Haas: Well, another heartbreaking thing had happened to her. Soon after her marriage her father was offered a high position with Lazard Frères in New York. He packed up all his family and moved three thousand miles away. There were no transcontinental phones in those days and jet travel was not even imagined. Mother felt completely deserted and the only happy times for her were when Dad had to go East in the summer to replace Louis. We lived with her family in Elberon and her sisters and brothers became almost like older sisters and brothers to me. I remained very close to them all their lives and still keep close contact with two or three of my cousins: John Cook, Elizabeth Lorentz and her sister Katherine Graham, who has now succeeded her father and her husband as publisher of the Washington Post. She, through the paper, was courageously responsible for being the first to expose the Watergate scandal.

Residence in San Francisco

Haas: My parents, after their marriage, lived at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, which then had an open courtyard into which carriages drove to deposit their passengers. Dad engaged a maid for Mother, showered her with gifts, among them black or red satin underwear which he undoubtedly had been used to giving his former "lady-friends."

Nathan: How did she take to this new kind of life?

Haas: Well, I doubt that she wore the underwear he chose, but it did not take her long to get used to having money to spend and a maid to wait on her. She would have nothing but the best, a trait I fear I have inherited. And all her life she was more than generous and thoughtful of others.

After some months at the Palace, my father rented a house at 2319 Buchanan Street from Eddie Eyre, a good friend of his. It was painted yellow with white trim. When I was about four my mother had a large doll's house made for me, a perfect replica of 2319. Rhoda now has it in her basement.

Nathan: Do little girls play with doll's houses any more?

Haas: I doubt it. I don't remember whether Rhoda ever played with it, and I'm sure Susan didn't.

But to get back to our house. I can still see some of the rooms in my mind's eye. The one telephone was fastened to the wall in the upstairs long, narrow hall which led to the sunny sitting room on the west. That is where I used to take refuge, under a mound of sofa pillows, when the horsedrawn fire engine from California Street used to gallop by, belching black smoke and furiously clanging its bells. My bedroom must have been on the south side of the house, and my parents' room on Buchanan Street.

Birth and Mother's Illness

Haas: This is where I was born, October 29, 1893. Since my grandmother lived in New York, a family friend, Mrs. Ludwig Arnstein, stayed with mother during her labor. At the age of three months, I had infant diarrhea. Old Dr. Ornstein hitched his horse to the post outside, examined me and told my mother that my bottles had not been properly sterilized. She had a nursemaid for me but she felt it was her fault, that she had not overseen things carefully enough.

I got well, but she fell ill and for nine long years she could digest nothing. My father took her to innumerable doctors in America and abroad, but they could not find the cause of her very real discomfort and depression. Today it would be called psychosomatic, I suppose. My own theory is that it was the culmination of a series of difficult events of her childhood and youth--her separation from her cousins and friends in Los Angeles, her teenage family responsibilities, her broken engagement, and after her marriage, the desertion, one might say, of her family when they moved east and abandoned her.

Haas: One day, my father met a friend, Fred Tillman, on the street. He asked how my mother was. "No better," answered Dad. "I'm desperate." "Well," said Mr. T., "why doesn't she try Christian Science? It can't hurt and it might help her. I know a good practitioner."

Christian Science

Haas: So mother went to the practitioner, and in six weeks was perfectly well. She never joined the Church, but Christian Science was her rod and her staff until the day she died. She had several of these same strange episodes which lasted three or four years at a time, when she took to her bed, could digest nothing, lost all powers of decision--this usually strong and decisive woman--and then came out of it as quickly as she had gone under. The cause was always something for which she blamed herself, although she was not in the least responsible.

Nathan: That must have been dreadful for her, and for your father and you.

Haas: Yes, indeed it was. Neither doctor nor practitioner could help her then. I ran the house, moved my parents to and from their country home in "Fair Oaks," now called Atherton, and saw her every day. At one time, during such a "spell," I spent my mornings doing translations from the French. I got permission from Edmond Fleg, the famous French writer, to translate "Pourquoi Je Suis Juif," only to find that Mrs. Stephen Wise was half-way through it. Fleg had forgotten. So then I tackled one of Fleg's plays: "Le Juif du Pape." Rabbi Louis I. Newman became very much interested in it, and intended to have his Temple Emanu-El dramatic group put it on. But he moved to New York before carrying out his plan.

Nathan: I didn't know you spoke French.

Haas: Yes, I learned to speak quite fluently when I was about four and had a French nurse, Alice. I have always loved the French and anything French, in spite of being aware of their "folie de grandeur" epitomized by de Gaulle. Of course, their present anti-Israel, anti-American political stand and their insularity all have had a great effect on me. But way down deep, I think I will never lose my affinity for their aesthetic sense. I deplore the high-rises (the "gratte ciel" as they are descriptively called) that are beginning to offend the eye in Paris, that most beautiful of all cities.

And I read that many of the great old London buildings are being torn down to make room for modern skyscrapers. This is certainly the age of mediocrity and ever-increasing crime.

Haas: Scientific explorations and medicine have made enormous strides, of course. On our first landing on the moon, our butler, Thomas Yamagami and I were looking at the full moon. I said, "Isn't it wonderful to think that man has reached the moon?" Thomas answered sadly, "We cannot write poems to the moon any more." (In Japan, August is the month when everyone writes poems to the moon.)

Nathan: I see. That is well put.

Now, I wonder if you would like to talk a little more about your childhood and youth?

Haas: When I was about seven or eight, Miss Katharine Burke, the Miss Burke, was then a private teacher, and she it was who taught me to read and write. She became a close friend of my parents. At nine, I think, I was sent with a nurse of course, to Pacific Heights School on Jackson Street. After about three or four weeks, my mother came to visit. She found over half the class with their faces bound up with the mumps, so that was the end of public school for me.

Nathan: Did you catch the mumps too?

Haas: No, of course not. Remember, I was then a Christian Scientist. Years later, when I became engaged at twenty, I mentioned this fact rather casually to my fiancé. Walter could not have looked at me with greater horror if I had said I had been a streetwalker. I later asked him why he was so shocked. He answered quite dramatically: "I could see our future children lying dead at my feet because you wouldn't call a doctor." "Of course I would call a doctor," I said. "They will be your children as well as mine."

When we married and had children, the doctor's visits began to convince me that I was being very inconsistent. Gradually, I slipped more and more into medical treatment for myself, too, but Science did much for me, for which I can never be grateful enough. I never spoke of it to my children, of course, because of the way Walter felt, but I was very gratified when Rhoda said to me not too many years ago that one thing I had given her was the capacity for not being afraid.

Mother's Music and Musical Friends

Nathan: To come back to your childhood. Was there much music in your parents' home?

Haas: Mother could play the piano and had a very fine one. But it is the famous musicians who were her friends that I remember. Bruno Walter, Gaetano Merola, Pierre Monteux, who adored her, and others.

Haas: For one of her birthdays, which she celebrated in New York, her brother Eugene had engaged Rudolph Serkin to come from Washington and play after dinner. (My uncle, by the way, had enabled Mr. & Mrs. Serkin and Mr. & Mrs. Adolph Busch to escape from Hitler's Germany.) The piano could not be gotten into the elevator, so it had to be hauled up the outside of the building to my Aunt Ruth Cook's apartment. Serkin played like a dream. He thought mother a dream, too. Later, whenever he came to San Francisco, he would telephone to her and say, "I am here again. If you would like to ask five or six of your friends for tea, I will come and play for you."

In 1956, he was to be soloist with our symphony. Friday morning, he went to Podesta's to order some flowers for mother. He asked the clerk, "Why are all the government flags at half-mast today?" The man replied, "Because Mrs. Sigmund Stern is being buried today." She had been a member and later president of the Recreation and Park Commission for nearly twenty years. Though she was no longer on the commission, the city paid her this touching and beautiful tribute.

Nathan: Yes. It was beautiful.

Mother's Accomplishments, Activities and a Gift

Nathan: Along with these other memories of your mother, you spoke of her "many accomplishments." Could you mention some of them?

Haas: I cannot begin to enumerate all of them, but her mentors were Professor Jessica Peixotto of the University of California and Miss Katherine Felton, Director of the Associated Charities. My mother's first involvement with social service, I remember, was the Golden Gate Kindergarten. My father and mother were among the first to help form a symphony orchestra and the opera, given at "Winterland," before the Opera House was built. My father was a member of the first symphony board of directors, to be followed by my mother and then by me.

My mother was also a member of the first Women's Board of the San Francisco Museum of Art when it was started in 1932 in the Veterans Building, mainly by Charles and Helen Crocker. (When mother resigned from the Women's Board in 1950, I succeeded her and it is still my main interest.)

I will have much more to say later about my mother and her activities.



Sigmund Stern



Rosalie Meyer Stern

Haas: Here I might mention Stern Hall. When my mother gave Stern Hall, a dormitory for girls, to the University of California, she didn't know whom to get as a decorator. I suggested Frances Elkins. Frances was so enormously pleased and interested that she did it at cost. That was her contribution. "Because," she said, "a lot of these girls come from small towns, where they don't know what good taste means and I want them to learn."

The public rooms, the dining room downstairs and the living room, the "beau parlor," and the library, were all done by Frances. And for years after my mother's death, I had asked Mr. Scott Wilson, who was in charge of refurnishing, when necessary, to please let me see what was chosen, because I wanted to keep it as much like the original as possible. But I haven't been over there in a long time. I don't know what has happened.

Since Mother's death in 1956, I used to give a tea every year for the Stern Hall girls who were interested in art. I would show them my things, and talk about them. They changed house mothers several times and I have now, after sixteen years, lost touch with them and the teas are a thing of the past.

Nathan: Thinking of Stern Hall, do you know how your mother came to feel that this was something she wanted to do?

Haas: No, I really don't know. There was only one dormitory then at U.C.-- Bowles Hall for men. She decided the University needed another dormitory, I suppose, but that, too, was to be for men. She liked men better than women.

Nathan: A very feminine woman! [Laughter]

Haas: I said to her, "Mother, they need a girls' dormitory." She said, "I'm not interested in building a girls' dormitory." Well, I knew my mother well enough by that time to realize that somebody on the outside whom she respected and liked would have a much better chance of persuading her to do anything than I would. Which is normal.

Nathan: Definitely.

Haas: So I thought of Albert Bender, who had been a dear friend of my parents (I do want to talk more about him later) and thought he would be the man to persuade her.

I spoke to Albert about it, and I said, "I just can't make a dent. Will you try?"

She came to me one day, and she said, "Darling, I've had a wonderful idea. I think I'm going to change that dormitory from men to girls."

Nathan: And you said, 'Mother, what a marvelous idea!'

Haas: I did. [Laughter] The University was going to put in the foundation, and she was going to build and furnish the hall. They started on the foundation after a site had been agreed upon, a very attractive one. Then they discovered they were on top of the San Andreas earthquake fault! So all the plans had to be scrapped. They had been made by a New York architect, who had William Wurster as his assistant out here. I can't think of his name at the moment, but he was a very well-known architect.

The first plan, I remember had balconies, lots of balconies. I said, 'This is ideal for water-bagging.' Mother didn't know what water-bagging was. The plans had to be scrapped and another site chosen, which was safe. My mother by that time had gotten to know Bill Wurster so well and had so much confidence in his judgment and integrity and ability, that he was chosen as the architect.

Our daughter Rhoda was in the first class that occupied it.

GIRLHOOD RECOLLECTIONS

Home at Pacific and Octavia

Nathan: Now, shall we talk a little more about the places you lived in as a child?

Haas: Yes. As I said, we had lived on Buchanan Street. In 1900, my parents built their new house at 1998 Pacific Avenue, at the corner of Octavia. They employed a New York architect named Hunt, and my aunt and uncle, Elise and Abe Stern, built next door about that same time. Their house was quite different in character, being much more in the French style, perhaps because my aunt was more frivolous in character than my mother. My parents' house was dignified, but did not have much charm. However, it was so well built, with the timbers going from basement to roof, that when the earthquake came, the only damage was cracked plaster and the destruction of all the chimneys, which were made of brick. Otherwise the house remained intact. After my mother's death, we sold the house to the organization, "Great Books," conducted by Mortimer Adler. A few years later, he moved to Chicago. I had hoped the French government would buy it for a consulate. It had accommodations for both offices and living quarters. The downstairs was spacious and dignified with a beautiful view of the Bay. However, the French said they had no money at that time, so a speculator bought it from the trustees of "Great Books," tore the house down, and built some unattractive flats. My aunt's house next door had suffered the same fate some years before when she lost her husband and moved to New York.

Nathan: I see. Can you describe your house a little more?

Haas: Yes. It was built of stucco, with red brick chimneys. A low flight of steps led to the heavy iron front door. This opened into a narrow entrance hall, with an open fire place. (Why, I wonder?) To the right were two tall columns on either side of three wide steps, leading to a long hall which ran from front to rear. The walls were of wood panelling and dark red brocade. At the south end of the Pacific Avenue side was a large

Haas: dining room, panelled oak, again with an open fire place. At the other end of the hall, with a beautiful view of the Bay--later obliterated--was a handsome, large living room painted a beautiful green with flat columns in the corners topped with capitals of gold. My mother told me there were nine coats of paint on the walls and it never had to be repainted in all the 56 years she lived there. On each side of the room was a small open fire place. On the east, a door led into a small Japanese garden with a fountain. On the west was a conservatory where, in 1914, Walter and I spent most of the evening together at one of my two debut parties, causing much gossip. On one side of the hall was the library and opposite, the "smoking room," where we sat every evening.

I always dined with my parents and afterwards, would curl up on a pile of cushions on the corner sofa and read voraciously, oblivious to any conversation going on.

Mother had many young men callers after dinner. Dr. Henry Newmark, who could speak Latin fluently, Henry Brandenstein and others whose names I no longer remember.

Upstairs were the living quarters, each room leading into another. Many years later, I followed this same pattern when we built our house in Atherton. The attic contained the maids' quarters. In the basement was the laundry, the kitchen and a large ballroom which was used during World War I by a group of women organized by my mother to make pajamas and gowns for the Red Cross. The machines came from Levi Strauss & Company, as did the supervisor. There were several Red Cross groups doing the same thing but mother had to have her own!

Most important was the little room that Nishi occupied--important because he was important. He came to my parents as a butler (he looked about 16) in 1915, the year after Walter and I were married and remained until mother died in 1956. Some years after he came to work for my parents, Nishi asked for permission to return to Japan to marry a "picture bride." They produced a son and a daughter. Nishi's relationship to my parents was almost feudal. I think he would have laid down his life for either of them. He particularly loved my father. When Dad came home after work, Nishi would be waiting at the door for him with a chilled martini on a tray. I wonder if mother ever knew of this?

Nathan: Can you tell me a little about the furniture? You suggested your aunt's house was more in the French style. Was this in the English style?

Haas: No, it had no particular style but was very comfortable. Later, many years after my father's death in 1928, and after recovering from an almost four-year nervous collapse similar to all the others

Haas: my mother had, she went to Europe, taking Miss Alicia Mosgrove, who was then living with her, and Magda, her new maid. Magda was to gradually develop into the most important and helpful person in mother's widowed life. But more of that later.

Nathan: Your mother was quite well again?

Haas: Well? Thank goodness, yes. My Aunt Elise wrote me, "Your mother has bought everything in Paris except the Eiffel Tower." I was the recipient of a lovely diamond bracelet. She bought a painting by André Derain from the Thannhauser Gallery which looks like Magda, and a beautiful Monet, Mme. Monet in her Garden at Giverny."

Some Long-Term Friendships

Nathan: To go back to your childhood, were there children in the neighborhood for you to play with?

Haas: No.

Nathan: Were there friends who came to call?

Haas: Yes, but we lived in a formal atmosphere. My mother had a great many friends, as did my father. But no one ever just "dropped in." As for me, I too had many friends, but our "get-togethers," as I remember them, were all "arranged." I was never allowed to go out alone, even in my early teens. When I went to school, it had to be with a group, never by myself.

When I was four, my mother organized a kindergarden class at our house: myself and four little boys--Walter S. Heller, Louis Sloss, Teddy Lilienthal and Carlton Gunst. We remained good friends as long as they lived, especially Louis and I.

Carlton died of pneumonia at about the age of fourteen and my mother would not allow me to go to the funeral. She did not believe in the "reality" of death and thought a funeral would have a depressing effect on me. I felt humiliated and ashamed that of all Carlton's friends, I was the only one not there. Somehow, all these many rules and restrictions made me feel "different," but I don't think my friends felt that way about me. At least, I hope not. The closest ones were all Jewish, but I made many other friends after I went to Miss Murison's School. I will not name them, since most of them are not living.

My closest friend was Marian Walter, who later married Edgar Sinton, then Sinsheimer, a cousin of Walter's. In those days, there were "groups." Marian and I belonged to the group younger than Edgar

Haas: and Walter's and their friends. So, we did not know them well, until we made our debuts. After Marian's marriage, she and Edgar moved to Burlingame, so I seldom saw her.

Agnes Brandenstein and I grew very close and until her death--much too young--there was nothing we could not confide to each other. This was a most precious friendship.

Strangely, her death led to another very warm and wonderful friendship with Janet Weinstein, who then lived in Chicago. She and her husband moved there where he became rabbi of a temple. About three years ago, he retired and to my great good fortune, Janet's pen-pal friendship with me could develop into something greater and very rewarding. To everyone's sorrow, Jacob died last year, 1975. Janet bears her sorrow secretly and shows the world only her unique humor, cheeriness and wonderful warmth. I love her and feel grateful that she fills so important a part in my life.

Then, of course, there is Maggie Koshland Sloss, who married a friend of mine, Louis Sloss. Margaret, who is Walter's cousin, leads her life with great courage since Louis' death when she was only 57. She is fun, entertaining and is always there when she is needed. Come to think of it, Mother was 57 when my father died, but she seemed so much older.

School and Classes

Nathan: You have indeed been fortunate in your friends. Now, could you tell me more about your education?

Haas: As I said before, I attended Miss Murison's School until I graduated at seventeen. I took eight years of Latin at school, because Miss Murison thought this was imperative. I went through the last three years of Latin on a trot, because it just got to be too much!
[Laughter]

I was really a very good little girl. I never read anything I wasn't supposed to. That is probably why I didn't know too much by the time I married at twenty.

Nathan: Did you take music lessons?

Haas: I took music lessons for a while with Miss Jenkins, but I was her "shining blight." I never really liked music until Miss Godchaux persuaded me to go to some song recitals, which I greatly enjoyed, and later to some violin concerts. And then, finally, I was able to go to a symphony and loved it. Ever since, I have not been able

Haas: to live without music, although I still know very little technically about it. I won't say technically, but if I had played an instrument, I would have understood much more than I do now. But music plays a very big part in my life.

Unfortunately, my beloved husband is allergic to music of any kind and only goes to the opening night of the opera with me. I have so wished we could enjoy music together, especially now in our old age.

Nathan: As a school age child, did you go to Miss Burke's?

Haas: No. Miss Burke's school, which my father helped her to establish, opened only a year before I was to graduate from Miss Murison's.

Nathan: And that was in San Francisco?

Haas: Yes. My schooling there was interrupted by the earthquake. As I mentioned earlier, I first went to Pacific Heights Grammar School after having been taught to read and write by Miss Katharine Burke, who was a private teacher. She became a close personal friend of ours, as you will see.

Later, my mother sent me to Miss Murison's. Then came the earthquake in 1906, when I was twelve. I went to Miss West's for just a short time until Miss Murison was able to re-establish herself on Pacific Avenue.

Nathan: Was Miss Murison's just for girls?

Haas: Yes. Oh, yes. She was a spinster from Boston, a proper Bostonian. She would never have her school accredited to a university because she said that anyone she educated could pass any college board examinations. Well, about two years before I was to graduate, my parents offered me either college or a trip to Europe with them. I thought that I was not able to qualify for a college board examination unless I boned up a lot. Not that I was a bad student, but I cared much more about going to Europe. After nine months we came home, and shortly after, I became engaged to be married. My only education was grammar and high school.

Nathan: Perhaps only your formal education. I suspect that your education has continued.

Haas: Oh, yes, it still does. As a child, I took French lessons from Miss Godchaux. Have you heard of Becky Godchaux? I think I mentioned her earlier.

Nathan: Yes, that name is very familiar on the San Francisco scene.

Haas: Later, my two sons took lessons from her too. They always asked her if she heard from Mr. Yehudi Menuhin. So she would enthusiastically read them his latest letter. The little devils thus never learned French until 1929, shortly after my father's death, when we all went to Europe, my mother included.

The Earthquake Memories: San Francisco and Fair Oaks

Haas: As soon as I was old enough, I was always included in my mother's dinner parties. Perhaps this is why I have always enjoyed older people and felt quite at home in their company. I remember we sometimes had a slight earthquake; I could never understand why the "grown-ups" got so white and frightened. I was to find out. At 5:15 in the morning on April 18, 1906, I was picked out of my bed while I was still sound asleep by my nurse who slept in the next room, and carried into my parents' room and put in my mother's bed. Half asleep, I thought I was on ship-board, because everything around me was rocking violently. There was a noise of falling glass and breaking ornaments and a strange, subdued roar, which really sounded like the sea. Only then did I realize that this was a tremendous earthquake.

When the earth had stopped shaking, my father got up and looked out of the window. There were small spirals of smoke rising all over San Francisco, where people had gotten up early to cook breakfast. Their stoves overturned and this started the great fire. He turned to my mother and he said, "The city is going to burn down." I don't know how he was so prophetic. Later, we discovered that the big water main to San Francisco had been broken and there was no water to fight the fire. General Funsten declared the city to be under martial law. He stopped the raging two-day fire by dynamiting blocks and blocks of buildings. But by that time a large and important part of San Francisco had been destroyed.

We got up and dressed. The house, except for broken plaster and the fact that all the brick chimneys had fallen, was not injured, on account of its very sound building where the timbers went from basement to attic. Of course, everybody was out on the street. We took out some cooking utensils and something to cook on; I don't remember what it was, and we just didn't go back into the house.

Nathan: Were you in your garden?

Haas: No, in the front of the house on the sidewalk. Everyone tried to help everybody else. Mrs. Rudolph Spreckels, who lived in a beautiful house at the other end of the block, had been so frightened

Haas: by the earthquake that she was prematurely giving birth to her baby in their garden, and I remember that my mother went down to do what she could to help.

My parents had heard Caruso sing the night before. During the day of the 18th, we saw him in a wagon piled high with trunks. He was sitting next to the driver, driving out west. I don't know why west. He wanted to leave the city as fast as possible, so I should think he would have been driving east. [Laughter] That night my parents decided to go to bed in the house, even though we were having slight tremors all the time. Thinking to make me safer, they had me sleep in their Pope Toledo automobile on the steep Octavia hill opposite the house. Later, I thought this rather dangerous, because I might have landed in the Bay if there had been a severe quake.

In the afternoon of that first day, my mother suggested to my father that we go up to Buena Vista Heights to see the extent of the fire. I will never forget the awesome sight--there was a solid sheet of flame downtown from the north to the south. None of us knew how it was ever going to be stopped.

The next morning, I think it was, I saw General Funsten marching his troops down Van Ness Avenue, and that is when the dynamiting of whole blocks of buildings started, as I said before. However, my parents were convinced that the fire would reach further west. They sent down to my uncle Jacob Stern's house, who had some paintings, and had the paintings cut out of the frames and brought to us for safekeeping, and also had their servants come too. The two families who lived together, the Hellers and the Jacob Sterns, were in New York at the time.

Then my aunt and uncle, Elise and Abe Stern, and their son John, and my parents and myself, and the servants of both houses, went out to the Presidio for shelter. What a sight we must have been! The Pope Toledo, my aunt's brougham and pair, with John Stern's pony cart hitched on behind. We brought all the baggage we could pile in, including the paintings. When we reached the Presidio, my father went into an officer's house to see if we could use their facilities. They were most kind. Shortly after we got there, all of Chinatown, which was threatened, began to pour into the Presidio.

I forgot to say that we met Mr. Raphael Weill, who founded the White House, a fine department store, and his nephew Michel in the Presidio. They joined us.

Nathan: You had known them before?

Haas: Oh, they were dear friends. Raphael Weill vowed that he would not cut his beard until the city was rebuilt. [Laughter]

Haas: We realized that the fire was coming closer and closer and the Presidio was getting very crowded. The officer's wife very kindly offered to allow us to lash my uncle's paintings around a tree in her garden, and we went on to Golden Gate Park. We all slept on the ground that night. We had finally captured my completely terrified white cat, put her in an open basket and tied a sheet around it, and taken her with us. My cousin Walter Heller, feeling the poor cat needed some water, undid a corner of the sheet and she was so crazed with fear that she squeezed out and ran away. We never saw her again.

My mother used to be a great rider. She rode from the French Academy, which was right near the park.

Nathan: Did your mother ride side-saddle?

Haas: Yes. I have a beautiful picture of her riding with her father.

Nathan: With the veil and riding outfit?

Haas: No veil, but she wore a stove-pipe hat and looked, as always, very beautiful.

The morning after we came to Golden Gate Park, my mother conceived the idea of asking the Academy to send somebody on horseback to see how far the fire had progressed. It had been stopped within three blocks of our houses, although it did cross Van Ness Avenue further down. My parents decided to go to Fair Oaks, down the Peninsula. We had rented an old adobe house on a hill, and my aunt had rented a house further down on the level, for the summer starting May 1. What made the grownups think the houses would be empty I don't know, but anyhow they felt it was better to be out of town. So off we started.

As we neared the old Fourteen-Mile House, there was a huge lake across the road and we stopped. We had no idea whether it was the earthquake fault and if we tried to cross it we'd fall through to China. But we decided to venture across.

Nathan: Where was the Fourteen-Mile House?

Haas: Fourteen miles from San Francisco near Belmont. It was a very respectable place on Sundays, to which my parents often used to drive for lunch, and not so respectable weekdays, or week evenings, or whatever. We breakfasted and then cautiously drove on. We got across the lake quite safely; the water only came up to the hubs of the wheels. We later discovered that this was where the main waterpipe to San Francisco had broken, and that is why the city had no water. And that's why water reservoirs have been put in, which I hope they have kept filled with water, but who knows!

Haas: Anyhow, we stopped at the Fourteen-Mile House, and my father, who knew the proprietor, went in and said, "Andy, will you feed 28 hungry people?" Mr. Andy Burke came out and looked at my beautiful mother, who was extremely modest about her looks, and said to her, "Mrs. Stern, for the sake of your beautiful brown eyes, I'll do it." [Laughter] So we were well fed, and you can imagine we were quite hungry, because I can't remember the last time we'd had any food.

So we proceeded on our way down El Camino Real. By that time there were Stanford boys on the road with huge cans of milk for the refugees.

Nathan: Was the road fairly crowded by this time?

Haas: I don't remember that it was crowded at all. Of course it was a dirt road then. When we got down to Fair Oaks, we went first to the house on the hill which we had rented, and found that it had fallen flat on its face and there was nothing but rubble. Of course the earthquake was much more severe down there than it was in San Francisco, because the San Andreas Fault was nearer. So then we went on to my aunt's house and discovered that it was in very passable condition, only the chimneys had fallen. Everybody was afraid to light a fire anyhow. So we decided to stay there. My aunt, who was a very nervous person, had her little boy sleep in her brougham on the lawn, where nothing could fall on him.

Nathan: A brougham is a horse drawn vehicle, isn't it?

Haas: Yes. Each family dragged the mattresses and pillows and blankets down from the upstairs rooms and slept on the floor downstairs, because it was easier to get out quickly if there was a bad earthquake.

Nathan: Imagine being hostess to 28 unexpected guests!

Haas: My parents must have had some money, and having transportation, I suppose my mother was able to shop. She did sit down that night, I remember, and write to her relatives in Los Angeles to please send up some canned food, as it was very difficult to obtain anything, and said at the end, "I am really too tired to write to my parents. Will you forward this letter as quickly as possible?" She told them we were safe, and where we were, but she did not realize that her poor mother would be so upset at our not having enough food that she kept sending things all summer long! [Laughter]

My uncle, Eugene Meyer, decided to come out and see what he could do. This is in Pusey's book, but not quite right. He armed himself with a pistol and a money-belt and got off the train at San Jose, and in some way that I have never fathomed, he learned where we were, communicated with my mother and came to Fair Oaks to stay with us to see if he could be of help. I guess that's where the

Haas: money came from. I don't think we had very much, because I remember two weeks after the earthquake saying to my father, "Could you afford to let me have five cents for a little notebook?" And he said, "Yes."

Nathan: [Laughter] You were certainly an adaptable person! Your uncle never used the pistol, I gather?

Haas: Not that I know of. Naturally, my mother was thrilled to see him, because first of all, they were very, very close, and it was wonderful to have contact with her own family. He absolutely would not listen to her protestations that he not sleep upstairs, comfortably, in a bed. She said, "Eugene, you know there are earthquakes every few minutes and it really isn't safe!" "Oh," he said. "I'm not afraid." At twelve o'clock midnight, there was really quite a shake and he was the first one downstairs and out the door!

Nathan: I see you have brought out a charming little album of earthquake snapshots. Those are marvelous pictures of downtown San Francisco that I have never seen before.

Haas: Really? Will The Bancroft Library want this? [looking at pictures]

Nathan: I'm sure they would, whenever you are ready to let them go. These are really very interesting--quite a treasure. In this one, the children are in a pony cart.

Haas: That picture is of my cousin's pony and cart. This was hitched on to my aunt's brougham when we went down to Fair Oaks. This one is of Temple Emanu-El, of course in 1906. This must be the Fairmont Hotel. I mounted these. They might have been taken by Walter Heller, who was my cousin.

Nathan: Whoever took them had an eye for the most telling shots.

Haas: And this is Levi Strauss & Company..

Nathan: Right, on Battery Street. It looks as though there's only one wall standing there.

Haas: I think that is right.

Then of course, these are pictures of Stanford, which was nearer the San Andreas fault than San Francisco was. This is the Memorial Arch, all that was left of it.

Nathan: These Stanford earthquake pictures are new to me.

Haas: This is my cousin Fannie Stern, Jacob Stern's daughter, taking a picture of the house. So she may have taken the rest of the pictures if somebody brought her up to town. But--let's see, if I was 12, she was three years older, so she was 15, and evidently a camera buff.

Nathan: She has that hood over head! [Laughter]

Haas: Well, you had to take pictures that way. The only reason that I took the Zeta Psi fraternity at Stanford was that my Uncle Edgar, whom I adored, belonged to the Zeta Psi fraternity at Cornell. And this is a picture of my mother and her youngest brother, Edgar, who went down on the Titanic.

And this is Barbara Stettheimer, who married Julius Adler of the New York Times. He was a nephew of Mr. Ochs, the owner, and was a great friend of mine. We were at his wedding to Barbara, which was held in Atherton (it was then Fair Oaks). Arthur and Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger stayed with us as house guests. She celebrated her 80th birthday two years ago at a big dance. She has more energy than I.

This is our old Pope Toledo, which was the first limousine in San Francisco. You had to flip over the seat next to the driver to get in and out. It was highly dangerous. [Laughter]

Nathan: A wonderful looking car. Then here's a picture of a little boy on his tricycle, with a small wheel in front and two big wheels in back.

Haas: Here we are on the beach at Half Moon Bay. You see, the Abe Sterns and the Sigmund Sterns used to spend the summers together, and that's why you see so many pictures of us all together.

Here's the old Palo Alto tree. (I'll show these to my daughter, but I'm sure you'll get them, eventually.) Then I have another album which has to do with the earthquake. It shows the sign "Levi Strauss & Co." across my aunt's house, which was next to our house on Pacific and Octavia. Her house was used as company headquarters. I do not remember for how long. And then in front of our house is the stove we used as cooking facilities for the first night and day we were there.

Nathan: These are such good pictures; they evoke the times so clearly.

Homes at Fair Oaks

Hass: Later on during the summer of 1906, Mr. Edward Eyre, who had a big yellow house and a large garden down there--it strikes me that either he or his wife must have been partial to yellow houses!--rented us his house so that the two families would not be living under one roof, and we spent the summer there. We all grew to like Atherton, I mean Fair Oaks, so much that my father and two of his brothers decided to build summer homes there.

Nathan: Now, which two brothers were these?

Haas: Abe Stern and Jacob Stern.

Nathan: And your father.

Haas: And my father. My mother wanted very much to buy property up on the hill, but first of all, the utilities did not then go up that far--telephone and sewer and water, and all that, which was quite an obstacle. Besides, my Aunt Elise was quite determined to live on the flat. So Mr. Eyre sold the three families a twenty-acre square of land on what is now called Atherton Avenue. This of course meant that the division of land would be deep and narrow. They drew lots as to who was to get what. The Abe Sterns got the lot on the left, we were in the middle, and the Jacob Sterns on the other side.

The Abe Sterns and my parents built the following year, so the summer of 1907 was spent in a rented house in Burlingame. We moved into our houses in 1908. I have not missed a summer since then and that's quite a long time to have been going down there.

The Jacob Sterns did not build at that time [1907]. After my marriage we spent fifteen summers with my parents who put an extra story on their house to accommodate us and our children. We finally realized that it didn't do to have two families under one roof. My father again approached Eddie Eyre, and he sold him eight acres right in back of my parents' house.

In the meantime Abe Stern had died many years before, and my aunt had sold their house to Mrs. E. S. Heller.

Nathan: They were related to you?

Haas: No, they were great friends. Mrs. Heller had bought some extra property so the place was larger. However, her son Edward had married and she wanted to buy property for him, so my father, who was the only

Haas: person that Mr. Eyre would negotiate with, bought property for Mrs. Heller and her son which was adjacent to ours. They lived there all year round.

My mother cultivated every inch of ground. She had a gardener, George Nunn, for many years and quite a few others under him. After we moved, she supplied us with vegetables and flowers and fruit. When we built, Gardner Dailey was our architect. It was either the first or second private house he had ever built, because he was trained as a landscape gardener, but then went back and studied architecture at the Beaux Arts.

Of course we didn't know anything about the cost of building, and he said, "Well, you just count by cubic inches." He built a perfectly charming house,* which has stood up beautifully all these years, but he made the sleeping porches too small, and the dining room was a square box, so the next year we pushed out a bay window. Until 1950, when all our children were grown, we never made any changes in the house.

Nathan: Do you have a studio there?

Haas: That was built in 1951. We did over the house just before the Korean War, and Mrs. Elkins furnished it.

Nathan: How did you come to choose Gardner Dailey as an architect?

Haas: Well, we asked Bruce Porter, whom I mentioned before, if he would build it. He said he knew nothing about blueprints but he did know a very promising young architect and he would "hold his hand." And so that is why we have the imaginative feature of a beautiful slate roof with a very graceful turn to it. I think he and Gardner worked very well together.

When we first started to build, we wanted it to be as simple as possible as far as a garden went, and we thought we'd get along with a gardener three times a week. By the time the foundations were in, we'd decided we wanted a full-time gardener. However, we put a hedge all around to keep the garden within definite limits. The rest was left uncultivated with beautiful old oaks and other trees; a very lovely outlook.

We had no outside entrance, so we always went through my parents' place. It was very fortunate that we moved out when we did, because my father died in '28, and I don't know if I would have had the courage or the heart to leave my mother alone. Not that she was not a very independent woman. And we were near neighbors.

Later we bought a pear orchard with a little house on it, so that we would have our separate entrance, which was fortunate, because after she died, the house was destroyed, and her property was divided and sold.

*It was built in 1927; the date is on the fireplace mantel.

- Nathan: I am interested in the development of your taste. From your description of your parents' house, it sounds as though it had a certain formality about it. I gather your own taste is more informal?
- Haas: Fashions change, don't you think? And I do like cosiness. However, my city apartment living room is quite formal.
- Nathan: It has a sort of relaxed quality about it, but perhaps "informal" is not the right word.
- Haas: I think this room, the library (in San Francisco), is informal. We live in it. My house on Lyon Street was formal in itself, but it was so beautiful I couldn't resist it. I never can resist anything beautiful.
- Nathan: And as for your house in the country--
- Haas: Our house in the country is not formal at all. One thing I forgot to mention about my mother. I think she was around 80 or 83 when she decided to have Frances Elkins refurnish her entire house in Atherton, which I thought was quite enterprising at her age. Frances being a very sensitive person to what kind of taste her clients had, did everything she could to conform. She said to me, "I want to make a perfect background for your beautiful mother." And she did.

Mother's was an old house, an old-fashioned house, but Frances somehow or other transformed it into something new and fresh, which my mother enjoyed very much. In my opinion, Frances had the most perfect taste of anyone, and without compromising what she liked, she managed to adapt to her clients' tastes. The most valued compliment I ever got was from her. We were going abroad after she finished furnishing our apartment at 2100, and when I asked if she would mind if I chose something to hang on the walls of our little cloakroom, she replied, "I have perfect confidence in your taste."

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Nathan: Shall we go back in time a bit to pick up the story of your own life? I gather that you met Walter Haas when you were quite young. How did you meet?

Haas: Well, there were groups of young people then in Jewish society. My group was too young to go with Walter's group, which consisted of his sister Ruth, Dorothy Fries, Philip Lilienthal, Jesse Lilienthal, etc. My first remembrance of even seeing him was when I was riding on a cable car and saw him standing on a corner of Powell Street. He was--and still is--very good-looking. I had never met him.

Meeting Walter Haas

Haas: A year later, my close friend Marian Walter and I were invited to the Haases where Ruth was giving a dance, a small dance in the attic. I have no particular recollection of his being conscious of me, or I of him, but I do remember that Dorothy Fries and Ruth danced the Texas Tommy, which was supposed to be a very fast thing to do at the time. [Laughter]

I was 18 when I was to make my formal debut. My mother was in mourning because of the tragic death of her brother Edgar. Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Fleishhacker, who were very close friends of my parents, gave me a beautiful dinner dance at the St. Francis Hotel. And of course, there were a great, great many parties that winter. Somehow or other, I was always seated next to Walter Haas.

My parents took me to Europe in 1913 for a few months, and we motored along the route, but in reverse, which the German armies took when they invaded Belgium and France a year later. I wrote one letter to my husband--my future husband--to Walter Haas. His family had rented a house in Fair Oaks, and his cousin May Koshland was

Haas: visiting. When he came home from work one day, he found the letter on his bureau, wreathed in flowers by May and his sister, Ruth.
[Laughter] Rumors must have been rife.

We came home from Europe February 1, 1914. It happened to be his youngest sister Eleanor's birthday, but to his family's great disapproval, he left the dinner party and came over to pay me a visit that same evening, and things really began to jell, I guess. Not really, but then we became much closer friends.

In May, Walter proposed to me; he asked me to take a ferry ride with him on Memorial Day, and asked me to marry him. Maybe that's why I've always liked ferry boats. However, I was emotionally very immature, and I said, "I'm sorry. I'm not in love with you, and I don't want to get engaged." This totally surprised him, because we had been together so much and we were such good friends. I don't think he really understood my feelings at all. Perhaps I didn't either.

A few days later, at his sister Ruth's marriage to Philip Lilienthal, I caught the bride's bouquet. To my utter confusion, when I went to congratulate his parents, his father patted my head in a very sweet and friendly way [laughing], which made me nearly sink through the floor! After the wedding, Walter and Morgan Gunst, who at that time was Marian Walter's dancing partner at the thé-dansants, which were very popular in those days, took Marian and me out to the Cliff House for tea. I didn't know what to do with the bridal bouquet. So Walter said, "I'll put it in the ice box until you come back," and ever since, his sister has called him "Ice Box Joe."
[Laughter] (Perhaps my children will enjoy these nonsensical things.)

Walter had really become quite crushed at my refusal (he does not understand it to this day), and I began to think things over. On June 11th, my parents and I were dining with Walter and Florence Stettheimer. The telephone rang and William Fries said, "My daughter Dorothy is engaged to Jesse Lilienthal." We were all left gasping, as a cousin of Walter's, whom he called the Sheik, had been very attentive to two girls; one of them was Dorothy. As soon as we had recovered from the shock, my parents and I went home. At 10:30 p.m. our telephone rang. It was Walter. He said, "Have you heard the news?" I said, "I simply can't believe it." Then he asked, "When can I come down to see you?" I answered, "Any time." "Let's make it Thursday."

Decision and a Wedding

Haas: My Aunt Elise, who was visiting us at the time, quite tactlessly went to the station with me to meet him, she trying very hard to find out how I felt about him. We had dinner and afterwards he asked me to take a walk in the garden. Under one of the beautiful oaks he again asked me to marry him. This time I said Yes. We went back to the house and told my parents and Aunt Elise. My cute father rushed to the icebox, where he had a bottle of champagne chilling. (I think he always kept one there, but this seemed very apropos.) Walter called up his parents and Ellie cried because her big brother was going to get married. Later we became the closest of friends.

Nathan: Can you tell me just what the relationship was between this other surprise engagement and your changing your mind?

Haas: Well, Walter wanted to make sure of me, I suppose. [Laughing] He didn't want me to marry somebody else. I had nobody else in mind. I wasn't attracted to anyone else. It was simply that I thought I wasn't mature enough for marriage. I'd been brought up very strictly. Nevertheless, I was popular. I was never a wallflower at any dance. I had always enjoyed the company of males, of whatever age, and still do! But I just wasn't sure that I was in love. I was too immature to really know what love meant.

I can only say that I have never seen a man look at a woman with the devotion and love that Walter did--the way he looked at me when we were together. Really, he never took his eyes off me! I'm fortunate that this love and devotion, and his own word, cherishment, have lasted to this day, 60 years later. And I couldn't live without him. We have been so very happy.

We were married October 18th, 1914, by Rabbi Martin Meyer. The ceremony took place under the pergola of my parents' beautiful home in Fair Oaks. Isabella Worn did the decorations, as she did for Rhoda's wedding at our country home many years later.

We had intended to go to Europe for our wedding trip, but of course the war intervened, and so we went east. First to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Having no proper clothes for horse-back riding, I had to wear a skirt and a high-necked shirtwaist going down the Grand Canyon trail, suffering agonies, as I do when astride any beast, mule or horse.

We then went to New York, and one of Walter's uncles, Joey Koshland, loaned us his car and chauffeur for a trip through the Berkshires, which were aflame with autumn. A great many members of

Haas: Walter's family lived in Boston at the time, as the headquarters for their wool business was there. We were invited to a family dinner. We stopped somewhere the day before, and liked it so much that we decided to stay another couple of days, and simply telephoned we weren't coming. I'm sure this must have been very annoying to them, but we finally got there, and they all made me very welcome, and I think forgave this unforgiveable offense.

Then we went to Palm Beach, which was out of season. And after our weeks at Palm Beach, we went to Cuba, where the longest road was 120 miles long. On our way back to San Francisco, we stopped in Los Angeles, where "Father Abe" as I called Walter's father, whom I already adored, met us. He wanted to introduce us to his family, and I was to meet my mother's family later.

When we came back, we lived at the Fairmont Hotel for three months. That summer we moved to Fair Oaks to stay with my parents for the summer. When my mother came in our room at about 5 p.m. the day we arrived, and our trunks were still standing partially unpacked, she was scandalized, as my father was the most meticulously neat person, and she was used to this. So she said to me, "You haven't finished unpacking your trunk and putting your things away to have the room neat for your husband when he comes home?" I said, "Mother, dear, he won't even notice the trunk."

The next morning I said to Walter, "Did you mind that the trunk was in our room when you came home?" He said, "What trunk?" And he's been like that ever since. I live through my eyes, and he sees nothing. He lives through his brain and his heart.

Walter, Jr.

Haas: Walter, Jr. was born in 1916. I had never seen a newborn baby until six weeks before, when my friend Marian Sinton had her first child, a daughter who was absolutely adorable. She didn't look like a newborn baby at all, and still looks almost exactly the way she did at birth though she is now a grandmother. So I was completely unprepared for this dreadful-looking infant, who was yellow with red spots with his nose all over his face. I gave one look of disgust and said, "Take it away." [Laughing]

Nathan: He's improved since?

The World War I Years

Haas: Indeed yes--he is very handsome. But he was a shock to me. Well, I nursed him for four months. The next year was 1917 and Walter, my husband, enlisted in the army. He went into the Quartermaster Corps and was stationed at the Presidio, where he spent most of his time peeling potatoes. My mother never quite forgave him for announcing his enlistment on her Silver Wedding Anniversary. In the winter we lived in what we called the little brown house at 21 Presidio Avenue. It was half of a double house, which had been remodeled by Bruce Porter, who later became a great friend of ours. It was really a charming house that got morning sun and afternoon sun.

Later my husband decided that he wanted to go into the Field Artillery, and so in the summer of 1918, we went to Camp Zachary Taylor, Louisville, where he went to officers' training school. I was pregnant at the time with Peter, and my mother didn't want me to go alone. So Walter's sister Eleanor, to whom I was devoted, went with me.

Louisville was dreadfully hot. Heat is very difficult for me to endure, but at that time nothing mattered but the war. Nothing mattered but my husband's part in the war. Eleanor and I had very long, thick hair at that time, and we used to dress it and then take a bath, because if we had done it in reverse, we would have had to take another bath!

Besides her affection for me, Ellie probably had a stronger motive for going to Louisville. It was nearer New York, and she had become engaged to her cousin, Dan Koshland, and they were to be married very soon. He was then in the army and stationed on Governor's Island.

After Walter got his lieutenant's bars, he was ordered to the School of Fire at Fort Sill. He was given a six days' leave in between, just one day short of our being able to go on to New York for Ellie and Dan's wedding and return. We stayed at Excelsior Springs and then went to Fort Worth, where he stayed with his company. I was to leave the following Sunday for home, as Peter was due in two months. One Friday morning, early, Walter telephoned to me and said, "I don't know that I'll be able to get in for the weekend because there is a strange new illness here called Spanish Influenza and they are going to quarantine the camp." I said, "For goodness sakes, get out before they do it. I cannot go away without seeing you." I knew he was slated to go to Europe in the spring. I just had to see him. Well, he managed to join me and we had the weekend together.

Haas: Sunday night he put me on the train. I can still see him running along the track for as long as he could see me. I was standing on the platform and I was all right, until a very nice man came up and realizing the situation, patted me on the shoulder. Then the dam burst! [Laughter] I had to change trains someplace in Texas, and got home late at night, getting off at San Jose. Walter, Jr. had been brought by my mother to meet me. He was then not quite three. He had never seen the stars before. I suppose when he was put to bed it was not yet dark. He was quite overwhelmed by the beauty and excitement of the night. I got off the train, coughing badly. My mother said, "What on earth is the matter with you?" I said, "There was a woman who was sick right outside my room, and I did what I could for her, but I don't think it was that. It was just that the train was so smoky."

Well, I coughed all night, and the next morning I rang up my obstetrician, "All Night" Smith, and said, "Dr. Smith, I've been coughing so hard I think I'm going to cough the baby up! What shall I do?" He said, "My dear, just go to bed and stay there until you stop coughing." And that was all the care that he gave me. I survived what was proven to be Spanish Influenza. Some of my friends who were pregnant at that time died. I guess I was tough. However, I gave it to the entire household and to my mother, who was then Red Cross Director at Camp Fremont Hospital.

All during that summer, I remember my mother having luncheon guests every Sunday, most of whom were officers who were stationed at Camp Fremont in Menlo Park. She never knew how many to expect, but there was always enough, and she grew to know many of them quite well.

Peter

Haas: The war was drawing to an end. Walter was ordered back to become General Morrison's aide, and I've always suspected that this was my mother's doing, which we quite definitely resented. The last time Walter wore his uniform was at the birth of Peter Edgar Haas, our second son, who was born on December 20, 1918.

We lived happily in our "little brown house," spending the summers at my parents' home. They had added a story onto their house to accommodate us. After six years and much longing for another child, I became pregnant again. The "little brown house" became too small for us and we started looking around for something in the neighborhood, which we liked very much. The choice boiled down to two houses--2255 Lyon Street, built by Willis Polk and a house on Washington Street which was less formal, but had no view.

Haas: After great indecision and the making of a list of pro's and con's of both houses, we decided on 2255. I always felt that it was too formal a house for children, but it was so beautiful inside that I let that weigh heavily in our choice. And it had a lovely view of the Bay.

Rhoda

Haas: Rhoda was born at the old Dante Hospital, September 20, 1925.

Nathan: Had you particularly wanted a girl?

Haas: I wanted a girl very badly, but I was so large that I was positive I would give birth to twin boys. It was a Saturday, I remember, when I went to the hospital, early in the morning. It was a long labor. When I struggled out of the anesthesia, I heard Minnie Fechheimer saying, "It's a girl," and I said, "I don't believe it." So Dr. Smith lifted up this little, crumpled rose leaf and said to me, "Look."

The joy that her coming gave me has never diminished. Never has she given us a heartache or a worry. She is beautiful inside and out.

When Rhoda came along, Miss Burke sent a little blue registration card, that I received 15 minutes later, for her school. Miss Burke always used to call my boys "living insults."

Nathan: Why was that?

Haas: Because they were male and couldn't go to her school. [Laughter]

Nathan: I see! She really was a women's libber, wasn't she?

Haas: She was very sweet and gentle, really.

I still believed in the more modern type of education and did not intend to send Rhoda to Miss Burke's. Before my mother met Miss Burke to go traveling in 1929, I asked her if she would break the news to her. My mother said, "Do your own dirty work." Miss Burke died on that trip and I was very glad that mother hadn't said anything, because it really would have hurt Miss Burke.

I had a very difficult interview with Barbara Burke when I told her that I wanted Rhoda to have two or three years of another school. I'd been very discouraged when I went to visit the school to find that it had not changed since the early days. It had not kept up with the more modern trends in education.

Haas Rhoda went first to the Presidio Open Air School, then transferred in the 5th grade to Miss Burke's and graduated from there. She made her Block B in school sports, but I don't think she was very happy there, because it had turned into far too social an institution--social in the sense of snobbish--and there were very few Jewish girls in the school. Rhoda was the only one in her class.

Then of course she went to the University of California (this was during the war) and quite distinguished herself there.

We were fortunate to have none of the teen-age problems with our children, although I'm sure they suffered through these years as young people have done throughout the ages. We were close to them; we were with them a great deal; we did many things together and this closeness has lasted all these years.

I am terribly proud of my sons, who have always been devoted to their father and me and shown it. Of course, they're quite different. Walter is an extrovert. Peter is an introvert, with a heart bigger than himself. Both of them have distinguished themselves in their separate careers and their marriages, thank heaven, have been happy. They have given us ten grandchildren, of whom I shall speak later. Truly we can say, "our cup runneth over."

We're proud beyond words of all our children.

Galileo, Deerfield, U.C. and Harvard

Haas: The boys graduated at too early an age. They both went to Galileo High School, which was then supposed to be as good as any public school in the city. Walter went to the University of California at Berkeley, I think when he was 17. When Peter graduated from Galileo he was 16. We felt that he was really too young for college and so we sent him east to Deerfield, where he took another year. He was very lonesome, but he appreciated the difference between the teaching he received at Galileo and at Deerfield. Mr. Boyden was the very exceptional headmaster at that time. Peter wrote home that the teachers at Galileo couldn't even be janitors at Deerfield. He was fortunate enough to take a history class with a very extraordinary teacher. One of those inspiring teachers with whom only a very few are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to study.

Walter went on to the Harvard School of Business Administration. He graduated in 1939. The course was two years, and when they graduated all students were offered Second Lieutenancies in the Quartermaster Corps.



Elise Stern Haas

Haas: And now our grandchildren--well, it's like an Olympic race when you hand the torch on. Walter's eldest son, and my eldest grandson, Bob, who is 33, has had quite a career. He was valedictorian of his class in 1967, and foresaw what later was to be called the Free Speech Movement.

Nathan: Did he go to U.C. Berkeley also?

Haas: Yes. After graduation he went into the Peace Corps and was stationed in a little village on the Ivory Coast, sixty miles from the capital Abidjan. He enjoyed it very much. He used to visit the villages of his pupils, and meet the chiefs and sit around and drink palm wine and eat the most awful food. I don't know how he survived, but I must say the Peace Corps took very good care of these young men and women, and examined them medically every so often and gave them the proper kinds of things to take to ensure that they wouldn't get sick.

He was taking his examinations--he wanted to become a White House Fellow, and he was taking his examinations over there, his preliminary examinations. He had been passed by the ambassador, with whom he became acquainted, our United States ambassador, of course. All of a sudden the U.S. government passed a rule that any Peace Corps person could not leave the country in which he was stationed. They could take a vacation, but they could not come to the United States, which seemed very unfair. He could not come to the United States for the rest of the examination. When he came back to this country, he went to the Harvard School of Business Administration.

Nathan: This is where his father had gone also, isn't it? Harvard?

Haas: Yes.

As I said, our son Peter was born in 1918. He was a very, very sensitive boy. He was my greatest trouble, because he was the middle one, and in order to get himself noticed he used to do all kinds of things to upset me. But from the very start there seemed to be a very great understanding between us. He really always got the rough side of things. I discovered when he went to kindergarden that he didn't see the blackboard, so I took him to have his eyes examined. He and I were sitting in the doctor's office, waiting. A little boy came out with his mother, and we went in. The doctor, after examining his eyes, said he was very, very nearsighted, and prescribed some quite strong glasses for this child of four. I was very distressed about it. The doctor said to me, "Mrs. Haas, did you notice the little boy that went out before you came in?" I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "he has cancer of one eye." I replied, "I haven't a word to say."

Haas: Peter did have a bad time of it. The boys teased him. He was called "the little professor" and this, that and the other. And I did a terrible thing to him. He was an adorable looking little boy, and I kept his hair in a Dutch cut for much too long. I don't think this added to his happiness in the least.

Nathan: Of course, now, it would be really quite the thing!

Haas: [Laughing] Those were not the days of long hair. He was bright. All the children are bright. But he had rather a stormy life, I think. He had good friends. He went to the Presidio Open Air School, as Walter, Jr. did, which just been started. They were both very good in arithmetic, because the teacher was not only a good teacher, but very, very pretty.

Miss Godchaux - French and Grammar

Haas: For some strange reason, no grammar at all was taught. If they had not gone to Miss Godchaux for French, which they really didn't learn, they would never have known the difference between an adjective, an adverb, and a verb.

I took French lessons from her, though I had spoken fluent French since I was four years old. My boys soon discovered her weak spot, Yehudi Menuhin. My mother-in-law liked him very much, and he called her Aunt Fanny. Aunt Fanny, or Grandmother [laughing] used to bring him down to visit on Sundays once in a while. She wanted Walter and Peter to become friends with Yehudi. They resented this very much. They said he was a sissy. My mother-in-law used to insist, "He's a regular fellow," which they denied, of course.

But they knew that Miss Becky adored Yehudi, and corresponded with him. So when they went for their lesson, and before she could really get started, they would say, "Oh, Miss Becky, have you had a letter from Yehudi lately?" And she would say, "Oh, yes. Would you like to hear it?" And the rest of the time would be spent listening to Miss Becky read Yehudi's letter. There was very little French learned!

Nathan: How evil of them!

Haas: How smart. How smart. Well, to go on, both boys went to Galileo. They each graduated when they were 16. My husband and I thought this was too youthful an age for college.

The 1929 Family Trip to Europe

Haas: In Walter's case, he went to school in Menlo Park for a few months until we took all the children to Europe in 1929, not many months after my father died. We asked my mother to go with us. Wishing to be independent, she invited Miss Katharine Burke, the "original" Miss Burke, to join her in Paris. They started off, by ship of course, for Egypt, while my husband, Walter, Jr., Peter and Rhoda and her nurse, Miss Driscoll, and I went on to Lausanne to put the boys in l' Ecole Internationale. There they did learn some French and were surprised to find that all the foreign students played one or two musical instruments and spoke more than one language.

Just before we were to leave for Rome, we heard the tragic news that Miss Burke had been stricken with a streptococcal infection on the ship and had died in Cairo. We wanted to go to my mother at once, but she, with the help of the American Embassy, had attended to all the sad duties and instead, joined us in Lausanne.

When I was 12 years old, my parents travelled to Europe. They invited Miss Burke to go with us. She studied paintings for six months before we left. She took me to all the galleries abroad, explained that the paintings I saw were structured in the form of a circle, a triangle or a square and then had me analyze them from this point of view. Thus, at an early age, I became familiar with the great art of the past. This awakened my interest in art, which has only grown with time, greatly enriching my life. Later, my father was to help her found her private school, but as I was within a year of graduation from Miss Murison's, I did not go to Miss Burke's. Rhoda and then my three granddaughters were pupils there, though Susan Goldman changed in her junior year to attend Lowell High School, a public school which she much preferred.

To get back to our trip--we went on to Rome. My husband had been given a letter from a priest in San Francisco who knew his father, to a priest on L'Osservatore Romano, a Catholic newspaper, so one day he and Rulli, our guide, presented this letter. The priest, whose name I forget, read the letter and his eyebrows went sky-high. "Mr. Haas" he said, "this is extraordinary. This letter requests a private audience with His Holiness, the Pope."

My husband, who never loses his presence of mind, whispered to Rulli, "How much?" "One thousand dollars," Rulli whispered back. "Oh, Father," said my husband, "This is too great an honor for one not of the Catholic faith." "Well," said the priest, "how about a Throne Room audience?" Again, the whisper to Rulli and the reply, "Five hundred dollars." Said my husband, "Unfortunately, I have not the proper formal clothes with me." So he settled for a public audience which we could have obtained through the concierge.

The next day, my mother, my husband, Miss Driscoll and I went to the audience. In those days it consisted of about 200 people. I remember a group of peasants from Naples, starry-eyed at the

Haas: thought of being personally blessed by Il Papa. We stood ranged around the walls of a large room and presently a fat Cardinal came in, walked slowly around the room to see that nothing unseemly would meet the Pope's eye. He stopped in front of Miss Driscoll, the only Catholic in our own little group and said, "Sister, cover thyself." She was wearing a modest V-neck dress, while my mother and I were muffled to the chin.

From Rome we went to Paris for seven weeks--the only time I ever found a stay in Paris too long. My mother was ill from the strain of my father's long illness and death and from Miss Burke's death. The boys got the measles at school, not serious of course, and even Dodie got a sore throat. My husband passed the time playing squash, which gave me the idea, when we returned to San Francisco, of building a squash court for him at the back of our house. This gave him years of pleasure. The many who came out to play included Gene Tunney, the boxer.

The 1939 Trip

Haas: The war clouds were gathering in 1939 when we decided to go abroad again. We felt it would be the last time we and the children would travel together. In Paris on July 14th, we saw a huge parade of French troops, tanks and artillery, etc. France seemed invincible. From there we took the North Cape trip. We went to Oslo, where there had been a Nazi demonstration two days before. This was not very reassuring. We then went to Copenhagen and Stockholm.

I called my aunt in Paris, who was married to the Brazilian Ambassador to France, Luis de Souza-Dantas, and said to her, "Shall we come back to Paris or go home? Do you think war will break out any minute?" And she said, "Oh, I don't think there'll be any war this year." Each previous year she had been telling us that there would be war that summer, but this summer she said, "No danger."

So we gave up our one cabin on a Swedish liner, which we had taken as a precaution, sent our trunks to Paris and flew to Amsterdam, because we didn't want to go into Germany. We had engaged a car to meet us and we motored for a few weeks through Holland and Belgium. When we got to Brussels, we got a cable from my uncle Eugene Meyer who was in our government and therefore very careful not to divulge any secret information. The cable said, "Spoke to your mother this morning. Don't you think you've had a good enough time?" Well, this annoyed me a little because he was so cryptic. I didn't know whether my mother had called him because she was anxious about us, or whether he had called her to find out where we were, and thought that we should come home because of the worsening situation.

Haas: In answer, we cabled to him, "Our plans are to go to Paris and sail on August 31st. Is that early enough?" He cabled back, "Your guess is as good as mine." The boys had already left for the U.S. via Rotterdam, which was bombed within a month. We thought, "Well, our trunk is in Paris and we've given up our cabin, and to change plans now is very complicated," so we decided to go on to Paris. We rang up my aunt, and she said, "Come right along. Nothing's going to happen. Anyhow, not for a couple of weekends." [Laughter]

Nathan: That was comforting.

Haas: We arrived in Paris Saturday night. The next day, we went to Barbizon and saw the Palace of Fontainebleau where I looked in vain for a set of needlepoint furniture similar to the one Florie and George Blumenthal had given us as a wedding present, which I was told was in one of the great salons. After this lovely, peaceful day, we returned to Paris. Monday Walter went to see his friend and consultant at the U.S. Embassy, while Rhoda and I lunched at my Aunt Elise's. She had quite a group there. Some had been in Vienna when Hitler took over and told of seeing some of the highborn Jews there cleaning the sewers--just a glimpse of the horrors to come. The Ambassador was late; we were all at table when he arrived. His face was very grave and he said, "The French are mobilizing and there will be war in two days!"

At about two-thirty, Walter called me and said, "My friend at the Embassy assured me we could wait until the 31st" (the date of our return accommodations). I told him what Luis had said and begged him to go to the American Express and get two cabins for Wednesday. Neither of us had sense enough to change to a neutral line. The next day at the hairdresser's, we heard of the Russo-German pact. Every foreigner in Paris rushed to get accommodations on any ship that would take them. The Blumenthals sailed Friday on the Netherlands and Walter had a terrible time persuading Madeleine Russell to leave. He, Rhoda and I sailed on an English ship, the Aquitania, on Wednesday, two days after Luis had given us the news.

Every cabin was taken, of course, and people were sleeping on the decks, in the halls, in the bars, everywhere. I had begged my Aunt Elise, whom I so dearly loved, to come with us, but she refused. She came to see us off, and I can still see her, a small, slim, sad figure in black, walking away after bidding us good-bye. Would I ever see her again?

When France fell, all the diplomatic corps were transferred to Vichy with the French government. Against all diplomatic rules, her husband, Ambassador Luis de Souza-Dantas, and his entire staff, were interned. Although he was not Jewish, he had helped many Jews who had escaped to France, and of course, his wife was Jewish. Eventually,

- Haas: he and his staff were released. My aunt finally left Vichy for Bordeaux and Spain. She and the wife of the Chinese Ambassador, each with a maid and a littledog, shared a cabin on a small freighter going to New York.
- Nathan: Not a very comfortable voyage.
- Haas: Indeed not. But we were happy to know her safe in her own country. After the war was over, she returned to France.
- Nathan: Shall we go back to your arrival in the U.S., in the nick of time?
- Haas: Yes. We were met at the boat by Walter Jr. He brought with him an enchanting looking girl, Evelyn Danzig. She seemed very nervous and embarrassed, so I was sure there was more than met the eye! That night we took them to dinner at the St. Regis--seated next to the band--and then to "Hellzapoppin", the noisiest musical ever. I developed one of my miserable migraine headaches. Evie told me years later she felt very embarrassed because she thought her dress was too low. If only she had known that I was so miserable I couldn't see anything!
- Nathan: New York sounds very strenuous. Was the boat trip difficult?
- Haas: Two days before we were to arrive, the sailors were blacking out the ship, painting the windows black, with no lights at night, etc. We slept with our clothes next to us. Why we undressed at all, I don't know, for everyone knew there were German submarines about and we were on a British ship. Ten days later, the Lusitania was sunk. The father of our friends, Irene Jacobi and Dorothea Greenebaum, went down on her.

When we reached New York, we were invited to spend the weekend at the Arthur Sulzbergers' country place in White Plains. He was publisher of the New York Times. Iphigene, a wonderful woman, and I had been childhood friends since the age of six, and we still pick up the threads where we dropped them last.

To be with them at that time was like holding a wake for the world. Arthur and his chief editor spent their time between New York and White Plains. I will never forgive them for not waking us at 6 on Sunday morning to hear Winston Churchill make his speech declaring war on Germany.

Wartime and the Family

Nathan: During the war period, what happened to Walter Jr. and Evie?

Haas: They were married, and after their honeymoon they came out here to live. They took a flat on Jackson Street. Walter was in uniform by that time, having been offered a second lieutenancy in the Quartermaster Corps when he graduated from Harvard Business School.

Evie came out to a perfectly strange city with no friends. Unfortunately, I was in very bad health at the time. I was having constant headaches, very crippling ones, and Walter was ordered to Salt Lake City to a post there. Evie must have been very lonely here.

I made up my mind that I wasn't going to impose on Evie by dropping in or being there too often as my parents-in-law used to do and which I greatly resented. I realized later that what I did was entirely the wrong thing. She had no friends here, and although she's always enjoyed people of her own age more than older people, my reasoning was all wrong.

Nathan: It sounds perfectly logical.

Haas: Well, it really wasn't. But she's resourceful and before long made many friends. She's made an important place for herself in the community, and Walter has too. He graduated from college with Bob McNamara, and they remained friends while Bob was with the Ford Motor Company and afterwards when Bob went to Washington. They've always remained friends. We see them ourselves sometimes when we go to Washington. I guess that it was through Bob that Walter was recommended to the President for various posts, which he held. One was the very important one in the national business association to find positions for Black people.

Nathan: Oh, yes. The National Alliance of Businessmen?

Haas: Yes. They were to find 100,000 positions in the country within one year, and they did it, I think, in six or eight months. Henry Ford was the head of it, wasn't he?

Nathan: Yes, I think that's right.

Haas: That, I believe, has now been dissolved. Then Walter was once sent to South America to make some kind of survey. He's now on the Ford Foundation board.

Peter and Jody

Haas: Peter has devoted himself more to social problems. He was put on the San Francisco Fair Employment Practice Commission, which was a tough one.

Well, I'm getting a little ahead of the story. At college, Peter was a pacifist. Then the draft came along. I'll never forget his coming home, dropping into a chair in my bedroom and saying, "Mom, I've just been classified with the criminal and the insane." He was 4F on account of his glasses. They didn't think of giving people like this who are perfectly capable of being in the army, a job where glasses don't matter, even at the front. If they couldn't fight, they could be helping in administration or something like that.

It was really almost the worst moment of his life. I found out later he even tried to enlist in the Canadian Air Force. He tried everything. He went east to find some kind of job that would put him into uniform, and he couldn't find one. This was a really very searing thing for him. Even though he had been a pacifist, he realized that though war was terrible, there were some wars that had to be fought. Although he had not wanted to go to Harvard Business School, he decided he might get a commission that way. The two year course had been reduced to one year of intensive study. Peter finished as a Baker Scholar, which means among the top five percent of the class. But no uniform.

Finally, he got a job in a small factory in South San Francisco. Peter went into the engineering department at the bottom, and in six months was in charge of it. And it was there that he met the boss's secretary, Josephine Baum, who came from the Middle West, and they became engaged. They were married during the war in our house on Lyon Street. My husband gave her away because there were restrictions on civilian travel at that time and her family couldn't come out here.

Peter had not wanted to go into Levi Strauss & Company. I think it probably was due to the fact that Walter was there. Peter adored and admired Walter, but there was that somewhat abrasive relationship in childhood, between the older and younger brother. Peter wanted to be on his own, but didn't know what he wanted to do.

Then the war ended, and he had to think seriously of what he was going to do. Jody said to him, "Peter, there's a job lying right at your feet. Why on earth don't you take it? Why don't you go into Levi Strauss & Company?" She persuaded him to do it. So he went in, and he had his own place there in the production department. His brother, after being president of the company is now chairman and chief executive officer, and Peter has been president for some time.



Four generations:
Left to right: Susan Sachs Goldman, Elise Haas
holding Daniel Sachs Goldman, Rhoda Haas Goldman.



Walter A. Haas
1974



Walter A. Haas, Jr.



Peter A. Haas

Haas: About that time, Peter was made campaign chairman of the United Bay Area Crusade at a very crucial point when there developed great divisiveness among the agencies. In spite of that, the full quota set was raised for the first time in eight years. The following year, in the natural course of events he was made President of UBAC and held the organization together when it threatened very seriously to dissolve. He had a fine team of men with whom to work, but he was a great leader. He has been on many boards including Mt. Zion Hospital and was head of San Francisco Aid Retarded Children organization. He is deeply interested, as they have a child who is retarded. He has done a great deal in that direction.

Two Generations

Haas: All together, our children have carried on the family tradition of involvement in civic and philanthropic affairs. As I said, Walter Jr. is now Chairman of the Board of Levi Strauss & Company, a member of the Ford Foundation and other national boards. Peter is President of Levi Strauss & Company, has always been a part of the Jewish Federation in one capacity or another, President of UBAC, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Crocker Bank and a Trustee of Stanford University. Rhoda is President of Mount Zion Hospital and a board member of the prestigious San Francisco Foundation, having been selected for that position by Dr. Charles Hitch, President of the University of California.

As for the grandchildren, Bob Haas and Peter E. Haas, Jr., are with Levi Strass & Company. Rick Goldman is employed by an outstanding law firm in Boston. John Goldman, a Stanford Business School graduate, was offered a choice of being employed by three top business firms in Washington, D.C. He chose instead, Sacramento and the office of the Budget Analyst. We are blessed indeed in our grandchildren, as well as our children.

HOUSEHOLDS AND HOMES

Nathan: Shall we turn now to the homes that your family lived in? When you first had your own house in Atherton, did you prefer an apartment in San Francisco?

Haas: Well, we had a house in San Francisco.

Nathan: At this same time?

The Willis Polk House

Haas: Oh, yes. We lived in a beautiful home--ugly on the outside and beautiful on the inside. You know the great architect, Willis Polk?

Nathan: Oh, yes. That must have been an interesting place to live in.

Haas: We bought it when I was pregnant with Rhoda. It was too formal but so beautiful I could not resist it. Then after our boys were married, it was far too large.

The Loveliest Lot in Town

Haas: Right after the war, my husband was going to London with Mayor Lapham and a committee to try to get the United Nations for San Francisco, and I said to him one day, "You know, I really think this house is too big for us. There is a beautiful lot on Spruce and Washington, the old Charles Wheeler lot. The house has been torn down. Emma Ehrman has a big house on part of the lot, but the corner is the loveliest lot in town, and I would love to buy it and build a smaller house."

Haas: "Well, he said, "I really have no time for this now, but if you want to do it, go ahead." So I rang up Emma, who was a friend of ours, and said, "Emma, there's been a sign 'For Sale' on your corner lot for a long time. Is it true?" And she said, "Yes, it's for sale. It has two conditions. It must be a one-family house, and it must have an easement through it for my sewer." These were easy conditions, so I said, "Walter and I are interested in buying it. I understand you're asking a very high price." She said, "What have you heard?" And I told her. I said, "We would rather not pay quite so much." She said, "Well, what do you offer?" It wasn't very much less, and she said, "Well, I would like to have pleasant neighbors, so I would be delighted to have you buy it." I replied, "You know Walter's away. Would you be willing to wait for the negotiations until he comes back?" She said, "Certainly."

Nathan: You make it all sound so easy.

Haas: It was. When he came back, we bought it. We spoke to Gardner Dailey and he started plans. I guess I'm a very practical woman. I said to him, "Gardner, there's always a chance that we may not like your plans, so I'd like to have it understood that if we want to stop, that we be charged for your expenses and a percentage--whatever you say." He said, "That's perfectly agreeable to me."

He started. At that time he was building houses with very high ceilings and very high windows, and they all looked somewhat alike. They were all lovely, but I wanted something perhaps a little more individual.

The Top Apartment

Haas: In the meantime, we hadn't sold our house. I had heard from Dr. Coblentz's wife, Anna, who lived in an apartment house at 2100 Pacific Avenue, that the top apartment would be for rent in the spring. This was not public and no decision had been made. Nobody was allowed in to see the apartment, but the owners' apartment, which was on the floor below was a replica, and she could arrange to have us see it to find out if it suited us.

Rhoda wasn't married yet, and the arrangements were very nice and suited us very well. We had to wait until May before we got an answer on the apartment. Then we made a three-year lease.

What a summer that was! I had to move out of a big house, repaint the apartment, using my old furniture, of course, and give a huge wedding for Rhoda in Atherton! Luckily, I had Thomas Yamagami as butler. I could never have managed without him.

Haas: We moved into 2100 Pacific in the autumn. I disliked living in an apartment and missed the airiness one takes for granted in a house. Meantime, we had parted from Gardner Dailey and given Eric Mendelsohn a chance. I did not think we would get along, but I did love Louise, his wife. After six months I said to Walter: "You know, we are getting as big a house as the one we sold. Why are we doing this?" "I've never known," he answered, which shows how good he has been to me all my life.

Nathan: What then?

Haas: Well, in the meantime I had become used to the apartment and in addition I tried my hand at sculpture and was so deeply interested in that creative process that there was no room in my life for any other. My earlier attempts at painting were hopelessly bad but three dimensional forms did not baffle me as the flat surface of drawing had done.

So we gave up all thought of building and I have never regretted our decision. We kept the lot, and when Rhoda and Richard were bursting out of their first home--the little pink house opposite my mother's--we gave them our superb lot, with a house of their own planning.

Later, Mr. Lurie bought the apartment house and after a few years, it was turned into a condominium. We had to buy our apartment and I did not want to. I said it was too ugly. My husband answered, "We will buy it and you may sell it the next day if you wish." "May I tear it to pieces if I wish?" "Anything you want to do," he replied, like the angel he is. So we tore out a bookcase and some ugly panelling, put in a huge view window to the East in the living room and a similar one in Walter's room. Frances Elkins furnished it, using many of my old things. With its unbelievable view, I think it almost the loveliest apartment in town and we have loved living here for 29 years. It is a beautiful background for our works of art. Of those, I will speak later.

Nathan: Yes, I hope you will.

After you redid the apartment, did Rhoda and Richard eventually build on the lot?

Haas: Yes. Joseph Esherick built their house, and I think they have enjoyed it very much. We also built them a house on our property in the country, which of course is a joy to us, because we can see each other with no effort. When their children were little, they used to come over to my studio, and we would have a great time doing sculpture together. I still have a lot of their youthful sculpture and a great many of their paintings. You know, children paint by nature. They love to.

Some Eric Mendelsohn Designs

Nathan: I wonder if you would want to talk about Eric Mendelsohn just a little bit. I was aware that he had been involved in hospital design. Was this Maimonides? Were you involved?

Haas: Yes. I was on the board, of which Charles Wollenberg was chairman. After the first meeting that we had, he became so enraged with Eric that he never came to another meeting. Can you imagine the chairman of a board, a building board, not coming to another meeting? It was to be built in the shape of an "L," so that nursing services were geared to that size hospital.

Well, when the bids were in, they were far too high, and the wing was eliminated. We wanted Charlie Wollenberg to explain things to us. It also had a (kosher) dietary kitchen and another kitchen. It was a convalescent hospital, and the upkeep of it was much more expensive than it need otherwise be. Do you see? It was so far out of balance by being re-planned that it was a terrible drain. I think Mt. Zion Hospital was running it and they finally sold it.

Nathan: I see. Were you involved with Mt. Zion at the same time?

Haas: I don't know if it was the same time, because I don't remember the dates. I wasn't a professional, so I didn't know how many nurses were necessary for how many patients and that kind of thing. After my presidency, I was put back on the board for a year. They had a rotating board at that time.

Nathan: And did Eric Mendelsohn do Madeleine Haas Russell's house? Was that subsequent to this?

Haas: Yes. And he used several features that he had put in our plans. He gave her bedroom the view and the sun. He put in the circular staircase that he was going to put in ours. He never provided an exterior plan for us, you know; it was just a floorplan. He insisted on furnishing it, and I never believe in architects furnishing homes, but that's just my own opinion.

Eric died many years ago, but his wife lives here and is a very dear friend of mine. We don't see each other too often any more, because she's busy and I'm busy, but I'm very fond of her--very devoted to her. She is an exquisitely beautiful woman, too.

Nathan: I see. Thinking again of the architects you have mentioned, I gather the one with whom you have worked primarily was Gardner Dailey, because of the house in the country.

Haas: Yes; the house in the country was either his first or second private house. As you know, Willis Polk built the house we bought in San Francisco. There were two or three houses on Broadway that he built: the one the Archbishop lives in and the one that the Sidney Ehrmans built.

Later, Gardner Dailey became the foremost architect in San Francisco.

CELEBRATIONS, TRAVELS AND INTERESTS

Birthdays

Nathan: We might turn for a moment to some personal and family reminiscences. There was a note about your husband's fiftieth birthday. It might be fun to go into these famous birthday celebrations.

Haas: Well, my husband, quite unlike myself, has always enjoyed celebrating his birthday, so when his fiftieth came along, it was the time of the Golden Gate Exposition, and Levi Strauss & Company had a live exhibition there.

I had a huge wood or cardboard set made. We had holes cut for people's faces. Various of his friends and relatives, who had written poems or speeches stood on stools of varying heights and put their heads through the holes to say their piece. It was a great success. One friend, a redheaded Irishman, had imbibed a little too much, and I had to have somebody hold him up so he wouldn't fall off the stool. We had a wonderful time. Walter said that was the best birthday ever.

We also got out a small edition of Time with his face on the cover as Man of the Year. At the bottom it said, "All I want is peace." Everybody wrote something for it. It was a great success. Under "Music" the page was blank.

Nathan: It sounds marvelous, but what a lot of organization it must have taken.

Haas: It was a lot of work, but it was worth it.

Another birthday we celebrated on one of our cruises on the island of Ios. Our guide, Taki, when we were on land, had had the yacht strung with lights, which looked very lovely. He also had engaged three musicians to play during dinner. It made things very gay, but of course Taki did not know that Walter is allergic to music of any and all kinds.

Haas: Another birthday Walter and I spent alone at Cortina in the pouring rain. I did the best I could, and with the connivance of the bartender and the maitre d' we had a very fine dinner. I had gone out and bought some little figures of musicians for the cake, which of course amused my non-musical man. That was the hardest birthday to do. We've had them in France and in England, always with friends from home who happened to be traveling. But it was the fiftieth birthday that really was the best.

And then for his seventieth birthday, we invited our children and our close friends--19 in all--to the McKenzie River. We took over Holiday Lodge and had a wonderful weekend there.

Sports and the Out-of-Doors

Nathan: Is this the famous fishing river?

Haas: Yes, we go there every year.

Nathan: How are you as a fisherwoman?

Haas: I have not fished in nearly 20 years because of my bad arm, but I used to love it. Prince Helfrich, our river guide for many years, took us out the first time I tried it. He said at the end of a long day, "Mrs. Haas, you could rise fish in a bathtub, but you can't strike them." But I learned, and became quite good.

However, of all sports, I loved tennis best. I had played tennis as a girl, taught by my friend Louis Sloss. Walter Jr. and I won a silver cup at the Menlo Circus Club in a mother and son tournament when he was 11. He was always a wonderful tennis player, and in his junior or senior year got on the Berkeley (U.C.) tennis team. He's also a very fine golf player with a low handicap. He's very well coordinated.

I must say, the Sundays on my parents' tennis court were among our greatest pleasures. Our friends came from all over to play. The years we lived with my parents, the cook Fleur and the butler Nishi, served lunch to all of us, having already packed a huge picnic lunch for maybe 20 or 25 people which my mother took up to Stern Grove for her friends. I don't know how her household managed, but they did.

I also played golf, but have never swum well. Walter loved camping, and fishing. The camping part I really didn't care for very much, but I learned to like fishing. It was only after I had an operation which affected my right arm that I stopped fishing.

Haas: This is really the one sport that Walter still can enjoy very much, because up at the McKenzie we fish from a boat.

Last year he got the thrill of his life when he caught a 27-inch trout on a number twelve fly. It was the largest fish that had been caught up there. So at 84 he outdid himself and everybody else!

His closest friend, except perhaps Edgar Sinton, was Albert Schwabacher. Al was a great fisherman, and decided he'd like a fishing lodge. So he bought an old Packard that had two front seats, accommodating six people. The back was fitted up with compartments holding a stove and tents and bedrolls and all kinds of camping equipment. Walter and I went with him one year, and his wife May, to explore sites in Wyoming. He finally found what he wanted, and he bought the most beautiful site on the top of a hill facing the Teton Mountains, which I think are as beautiful a mountain range as I've ever seen.

He sheared off the top of his hill, which completely puzzled the natives who always, because of the winters, lived in the lee of a hill. He built his cabin on the top, because he was there, of course, only in the summer. May and Joey, her spritely and adorable father, and Al had a very comfortable home with a big living room and a huge view window facing the Tetons. There were one cabin for the servants and two other cabins for guests.

Al was a great organizer. When his guests arrived he inspected their tackle and said, "It's not right. You haven't the right kind of flies." And he had--I can't begin to think how many--boxes of flies, which he insisted upon your using. You fished from a boat there most of the time, although there were places where you could wade. He had several cars. He planned everybody's day, deposited them on the river, told them where they were to get out, had somebody meet them, then haul the boat back home. You would think that this would be an awful nuisance, but he loved doing it.

We have spent so many happy summers there with him and May, who was so full of life, so gay, so attractive. She was a fine fisherwoman herself. May lived on cottage cheese. At meals, when a newcomer was there, she seated him beside her. Her favorite trick would be to exclaim: "Oh, my goodness. This cheese seems to be warm. Feel." He'd put out his hand, and she'd splash it into the cheese and spatter everybody! [Laughter] This was a regular thing. If you knew about it ahead of time, you somehow managed to keep out of range.

Later in life Albert bought another ranch over the Hoback Pass. It was on flat land, and it had an easy river to fish from the shore. He built some cottages there, and his son Jack and his wife had a house on the place. The family still own it, I think. May

Haas: doesn't go up any more. This bright, attractive woman has become quite senile--the thing I most dread. It was a very sad day for my husband when Albert died. He really lost his closest friend. We and our children had many very happy summers at Block S, with wonderful pictures, many of them showing us with strings of fish.

Nathan: Did you have the fish cooked and eat them right then and there?

Haas: No, they did that in the kitchen, but when we go up on the McKenzie, we sometimes have a fish fry. The first time we went was when we were on our way to Canada. I guess Walter Jr. was about 14 years old, and we took a friend of his, Peter Stein. Peter and Rhoda were with us, too. One of our first stops was at Thompson's Lodge on the McKenzie River. Walter and I went fishing in a boat, our guide being a man named Prince Helfrich. He was a great nature lover, a fine guide, and a superb fisherman. He taught young Walter to fish, and Walter has become one of the best fishermen, I think, in the country now. This is his greatest relaxation, and his greatest pleasure.

When we first met him at Thompson's Lodge, Prince was just a hired fishing guide. He and his wife had four small children. They were very poor and lived in a tiny, crowded house, but he was so truly a man of nature that he hunted and trapped, and so kept his family supplied with everything but clothes and groceries. In time, he became better and better known. With the increased money he made, he bought a larger house, together with acres of timberland which became very valuable. Our family, who grew to love the McKenzie River, always fished with him until he stopped pulling a boat. He became a close friend of Walter Jr., and their friendship remained close until a couple of years ago, when Prince, that healthy outdoorsman died of cancer. He was a rich man by that time. Now his sons guide and sometimes even a grandson does. Of course, there are many other guides on the river now.

Walter and Evie, too, became so enamored of the wilds that a few years ago they bought the old Zane Grey property on the Rogue River, located in a most beautiful canyon. There was nothing on the land except the stone foundations of several cabins. Our first visit was on our 54th wedding anniversary. (Walter and I) We went down-river by boat, climbing out on rocks while the guides maneuvered the boats through the most difficult rapids. Then we got aboard again. I was still fairly agile in those days. We stayed a couple of nights at a camp Prince had prepared and enjoyed the beauty of the canyon which was then completely out of touch with the rest of the world. The first thing Walter did was to put in a small airfield which is not the most reliable in the world because of unpredictable air currents. Later, they built a simple, lovely small house, which their facetious friends like to call the Haas-Hilton.

Haas: Our next overnight stop on that first trip was at an inn further down the river. There was an adorable white toy poodle there over whom I, who never liked dogs, made a big fuss. It was there that the idea of giving me a poodle for my 70th birthday was born. They, our children, are all jealous of her now, but nothing I have ever possessed has given me such complete joy. She is highly intelligent, completely devoted to me, following my every step, and loves me in her own uncritical way. It is always a wrench to leave her, even for a day.

Nathan: To return a moment to trout-fishing, is there great skill needed in the placement of the fly?

Haas: Oh, yes. Because if you're a real fisherman, you don't fish with bait, and you don't fish with wet flies, unless conditions are very bad. You fish with a dry fly, which you have to keep floating on the water, and then you have to be very quick, but not too quick, about hooking or rather, striking the fish. You see, it rises so quickly. If you are too quick, you take it away from him. If you are too slow--

Nathan: He takes it away from you?

Haas: Exactly!

We've had some of our happiest times on our fishing trips. There's no telephone, we're out in beautiful country and we really feel at peace with the world. I'm very grateful to my husband for encouraging me in this. Unfortunately, I've not been able to inspire him to go to concerts and opera with me, or enjoy music at all. But art he can stand for a very short time, and he really likes what I have collected.

Nathan: There's something about the thought of you fishing that just tickles me! [Laughing]

Haas: Well, I know I seem like a very citified person, and I am in a way, but I do love fishing. You should see how I look. Really terrible. I am not the "type sportive." [Laughter] I don't ride. I've always been afraid of horses. I was frightened of them when I was made to take lessons, and not put on a pony but a horse a mile wide, with my legs sticking straight out the sides. I finally asked my father to persuade my mother to allow me to give up my lessons with this frightening French ex-captain who shouted at me as though I were a whole troop of cavalry. My mother was a great rider, but my father liked horses as little as I did, so he understood.

Nathan: I see. Now, in addition to the outdoor life, you have also enjoyed urban travels, for example, in England?

"Gloriana" and the Mountbattens

Haas: I think it was in '52 that Elizabeth was crowned queen. I read somewhere that there was going to be a command performance of "Gloriana" especially written for this occasion by Benjamin Britten, so I tried to get tickets here, and was told that we had a better chance in London. It seemed rather a long time to wait. Then we wrote to London, and got back word there were no tickets available. And as I hate to give up, when we were in Madrid, I woke up at 2:00 in the morning and said, "I've got it! We will ring up our friend Howard Cullman." He was then the angel of Broadway in New York. He had backed many plays, including several very great successes. His second wife was much interested in the theater, so this was a whole new phase for him. He was also head of the New York Port Authority, which didn't seem pertinent at the time, but when I suggested ringing him up from Madrid, my husband said, "Well, that's a perfectly silly idea. We tried to ring up Rome and it took us three days, and we didn't get them." I said, "Try New York anyhow."

Well, we did, and within a minute we had New York. Unfortunately, poor Howard was in the hospital, but he had a wonderful secretary by the name of Rose, and she said, "Well, Mr. Haas, don't you worry. I'll do everything to see that you get tickets, if it's humanly possible." When we got to London, there were two very large tickets waiting for us for the performance. We found out later that Mr. Cullman had communicated with his opposite number in London who was head of the London Port Authority, and was also head of the opera, and that's how we got the tickets.

Well, my husband at that time just didn't like overweight. I later persuaded him that \$100 more or less on a trip that cost so very much didn't make much difference, but at that time he was still determined not to have any more overweight than necessary. Which is rather difficult, married to me! I have never learned to travel light.

So he had taken his dress suit in case he did have to use it for any reason, and his tuxedo, with black tie--his "smoking" as they call it in Europe. And he'd taken one pair of pants for both jackets. Our dear friend, Lucretia Grady, had insisted on giving us letters to a great many people, and unfortunately wrote directly, also, to her friends. And of all people, she insisted on giving us a letter to the Earl and Countess of Mountbatten.

I said, "Now Lucretia, don't be so silly. You know they'll be fully occupied with coronation duties, and it would only be an imposition. I really wish you wouldn't do it." "I want my best friends in San Francisco to meet my best friends in London," she said. There was no denying her. Well, we had not presented our letter to

Haas: the Premier of Greece, who complained to Lucretia, but we were only in Athens for three days, and I was more interested in seeing Athens than meeting the premier, I guess. It wasn't very polite.

But when we got to London, we had a private car meet us, and on the way to the hotel, I said to Walter, "Now, what are we going to do about this note of introduction to the Mountbattens?" And he said, "Well, I'm not going to offend Lucretia, so you'll just have to send it." The chauffeur overheard the conversation and said, "Madame, the Mountbattens have moved, and I will give you their correct address." I thanked him, and I spent a great deal of pains over the note, and said, "Only a promise made to a mutual friend persuaded me to write this note," saying we were in London, but of course we knew they were far too occupied with their official duties to see any strangers. And sent our best greetings and so on.

Nothing happened until the morning of "Gloriana" and my husband found that he had not brought a white tie. So I went off to Harrod's to buy it. While I was away, at 10:30 the telephone rang, and a very British voice said, "This is Countess Mountbatten's secretary. The Earl and Countess would like you and Mrs. Haas very much for cocktails this evening." Whereupon my husband got quite flustered because I wasn't there, and he now says that he didn't know when I was coming back. Of course I came back before lunch, but he swears I came back at five o'clock in the afternoon! [Laughter]

Anyhow he said, "Well, I'm terribly sorry, but we're going to the opera tonight, and we have to be in our seats very early." And the voice said, "Well, the Earl and Countess are going with the Queen, but they hope you can manage to come for cocktails. They would like very much to meet you." Well, of course we could have dressed beforehand and gone, you see, but Walter said, "Oh, we haven't time to come for cocktails and come back and dress and be there at 7:30. I'm terribly sorry." [Laughing] So another command performance was missed!

Nathan: How terribly funny!

Haas: Well, we got to the opera on time, and of course--

Nathan: However, with your overweight, you had brought a suitable dress?

Haas: I? Certainly! We had a private car that night, and as we got in the car I looked at my husband, who looked very handsome, and then I screamed with laughter, because his dress coat was black and his pants were blue! And imagine, if he'd gone to the Mountbattens in broad daylight, looking like that! [Laughter] Anyhow, I've had a much better time telling the story than if we'd actually gone.

Haas: The next day I got a lovely telegram from the countess, saying she was so sorry to have missed us, and next time we were in London, to be sure and let them know. Which I thought extremely gracious, considering how rude we'd been.

So, that was another faux pas. [Laughter]

Nathan: All done with the best intentions.

Haas: Yes. And I was a perfect lady when I came home and he told me that. I said, "Darling, you were perfectly right." But I've teased him about it ever since! [Laughing]

Nathan: That does impress me.

Haas: It impressed me too, I'm not often like that!

Nathan: I might ask how you happened to know Howard Cullman.

Haas: Oh, he was a childhood friend of mine. The Cullman family were friends of the Meyers and his older brother, Joe, was a very, very close friend of my uncle, Edgar Meyer. It goes back a very great many years. His younger brother, Howard, was about my age. We were childhood friends, and he took me out when I went to New York and we had a great deal of fun together.

When we married, his friendship switched to my husband. He tolerates me, but Walter became his real friend. He too has now died as have so many of our friends. It is lonely to get old, but thank God, we still have each other.

My son Walter is now a very intimate friend of Howard's nephew Joe Cullman. So the friendship has lasted through three generations, which is really nice.

Nathan: The Mountbatten story is really a great one.

After all that, do you remember the actual performance of "Gloriana"?

Haas: Oh, yes. We were the only unofficial people there, except the Jascha Heifetz. He, after all, is more of a celebrity than we are! The theater, Covent Garden, I think, was all roped off into sections, and everybody had been asked to wear their orders. Walter said, "What shall I wear? My Levi Strauss button?" People came in from the provinces and everywhere. Many of them stayed at the Hyde Park Hotel, where we were. It was great fun to see them leaving for the opera in their scarlet robes and coronets. It was a brilliant audience. When the Queen arrived with Prince Phillip and her ladies in waiting and the Queen Mother, of course everyone rose. The whole

Haas: Opera House was festooned with flowers. It was really a brilliant, wonderful occasion. I was very glad I had that inspiration at two in the morning.

Nathan: Exactly. Were you so dazzled by the audience that it was hard to concentrate on the music?

Haas: Oh, no.

Nathan: What did you think of it?

Haas: Well, Britten was a little modern for me, but it was a beautiful performance, and very exciting, I must say. Very exciting.

Visiting Israel

Nathan: You had mentioned very briefly, I think, that you had been to Israel, and you have quite a collection of Israeli art here. And also a beautiful old oil lamp that had been presented to you.

Haas: Oh, these, yes. To my husband from the Israeli government.

Nathan: What marvelous things these are.

Haas: Well, (gesturing) this bird is Greek, but I think it looks like a Braque.

Nathan: That is a bird in flight, isn't it? These antique pieces have such power.

Haas: Would you like to hear about our trips to Israel?

Nathan: Very much.

Haas: Our first trip to Israel was five years after the winning of the war of independence, which would be in 1953. Richard and Rhoda joined us and so did Walter's sister Ruth and her husband Philip Lilienthal. Ben and Mae Swig and another couple who were traveling with them, were on the same plane from Rome. We arrived in Tel Aviv at four o'clock in the morning, and were met by quite a delegation. As I got off the plane, one of the greeters said to me, "Now, you have come home." Well, I was a lady, and I did not reply, "But my home is in the United States." However, I don't think I ever had a deeper emotional experience than this trip to Israel. The spirit of the people, the courage, the conviction that this was their natural, rightful home. We saw so many things to remind us of the overwhelming courage that they had shown during the war, and the terrible tragedies that had happened.

Haas: One night a dinner was given by the Ben Dovs. He had been the first military governor of Jerusalem since Herod, which makes you give a little gasp! They had had two daughters. The younger, aged 19, was killed at the front. You can imagine the emotional impression these stories made. And Mrs. Ben Dov told me, when they were besieged in Jerusalem, ten Israeli trucks went up every day with supplies, and every single day the Arabs attacked. The Arabs controlled the hills on either side, and only about four trucks got through. When we went up that same road, we saw these rusting trucks that had been shot to pieces, lying on the roadside. The Israelis had and still have, indomitable courage.

It is a very vivid recollection. Mr. Ben Dov had formerly been head of the British Red Cross, and his wife became head of the Israeli Red Cross. She said, "I went to my office across the city every day. There was gunfire, and I would run and hide behind a wall. Every day that I got there, there were three or four or more women waiting to send packages to the men at the front. So I had to go. When the victory was won and the siege was over, some of our friends came (from Tel Aviv, or Haifa. I forget which) and rang the doorbell. I would answer, of course. They said, 'You've changed.'" And she said, "Well, of course I've changed. I've been starving for six weeks." And they said, "No, it isn't that. It's the look on your face. And it's the look on everyone's face that we see here."

And Mrs. Ben Dov said to me, "I am not a religious woman, but I think it must have been the hand of God that sustained me. And when it was all over, we went back to what we had been before, some good, some not so good."

Wasn't that a wonderful statement?

Nathan: Yes. So eloquent.

Haas: Well, another trip we made that impressed me very much was to one of the immigration points where the Israelis had built very simple, but very clean white huts to receive the people who were coming into Israel. In one hut were ten coal black, white-teethed East Indians, smiling and happy. It had taken, I think, three years for the news of the establishment of a Jewish state to get to them and two years for them to get to Israel. But there they were. In the next hut were a tall, blond father and mother with a child; dressed the way we were, who were East Europeans. Here were the three contrasts. These two families and ourselves, and what was the thread that bound us all together?

I asked Bishop Pike here, and he said, "I don't know." He later went to Israel himself, and died there.

Haas: But there it was, you know, this feeling of kinship. You tell me what the thread is. But it's there.

The next time we went--I don't remember exactly the year, perhaps 1963 or 1965, but the last time was for the opening of the museum in Jerusalem in 1967.

Nathan: I have seen pictures of the museum, but I'd love to hear what you think about it.

Haas: We were in Paris, and unfortunately I got the flu. I rang up our friend Dr. Lipsich, who is head of the American Hospital there, and told him I had 101° fever, and we were due for Israel the next morning. I really wanted to go. So he said, "Well, if you have less than 100°, you can go." Well, I had 99.8°, and we went. Of course, I didn't feel very spry.

I guess it was the next day, the day after our arrival that the opening ceremonies took place. Of course archaeologists in particular had come from all over the world, because the department of archaeology was naturally the strongest department they had. There was Billy Rose's sculpture garden, and the collection of fine arts, which was probably the department which had to be built up the most.

As a result of that visit, I have left our very large Braque "Gueridon" painting to the museum in my will. Naturally they have gotten a great many fine paintings since then.

Of course there were opening addresses, many of them in Hebrew. One by the American ambassador, who had not had too much communication with Israel. I didn't think him a very good choice. I forget who he was. We were tremendously interested in everything.

We did not go down to the Negev. I don't remember too much about the visit except a reception at Teddy Kollek's house, to which we were invited.

Nathan: Oh, he was the mayor?

Haas: He would have been, yes. He had a great crowd of people there. They followed the English custom of not introducing you at a big party, so I wandered around looking at the things that I could see, rather than the people. Like every Israeli, he has a collection of antiquities in his house. There were shelves behind glass, flush with the wall, and he had a great many small Luristan sculptures, in which I was very much interested. He saw me examining them, so he went into the other room, and he came back with a little Luristan horse and gave it to me, which touched me very much.

Haas: I sat next to him the other day at a bond luncheon, and he said, "You and Walter must come to Israel." I said, "Oh, I don't think we will." And he said, "Where will you be?" I said, "In Athens." He said, "It's only an hour and a half. Come for just one day and just see Jerusalem. Don't go to Tel Aviv, and don't go anywhere else." My husband was not too receptive to the idea at first, but it grew on him, and he said, "We'll go, but we'll stay two days and three nights, and it won't be quite so hard." So if all goes well, that's what we're going to do.

Nathan: What is Kollek like? Can you describe him?

Haas: Well, he is a very outgoing man, highly intelligent. Probably the best public relations person I've ever met. He has a warm personality and not to have let his burdens crush him is a sign of great internal strength, inner strength, and conviction. I understand that he is criticized by some people as being too soft on the Arabs, but he has very little trouble with the Arabs and he says, "If the Jews and the Arabs can get along in Jerusalem, they can get along anywhere." He's an optimist, I think, above all, and a very endearing person. We had our pictures taken with him, and he has lots of smile lines around his eyes.

Nathan: How nice that he can find something to smile about! Delightful.

Haas: Yes, he does. That's the kind of person he is.

You spoke earlier of the few antiquities we have on this shelf. One of the most interesting is an oil lamp which is about two thousand years old, which was presented to my husband by the people of Israel in appreciation of his many years of service to their educational, social and economic welfare. It was given by Golda Meir, foreign minister, state of Israel, June 18, 1960.

Nathan: That's a very simple clay shape, isn't it, with a lip.

Haas: The two small jugs were given to us by our very dear friend, Avram Biran, whom we got to know here in San Francisco when he was consul general. He is now of course in the cabinet, I believe, and director of antiquities. This is an arrowhead which was given to us by Avram Biran, which came from Tel Dan, where he has been digging for quite a number of years. I have pictures of where these two small jars were discovered in perfect condition. Isn't that interesting?

Nathan: Yes, it's so delicately shaped.

Haas: The middle of the 14th century, B.C.

Nathan: Does this look like bronze?

Haas: I think so. It must be. It's metal. Bronze can be any color.

Nathan: It is elegantly shaped. I gather then that you had also met Golda Meir--

Haas: No. I never met her. She is, to me, one of the greatest of all, as great in her own way as Churchill was in his. The strength and courage and wisdom of that woman are superb. There was such unity in the country, you see. Well, the third time we went we felt a diminishing of the pioneer spirit which we had felt so strongly during our first visit, and also our second visit. But the third visit was different. I guess that it took the six-day war to make it as cohesive as it was before. I deplore now the troubles that they're having, which they foresaw then--the coming of the Oriental Jews, who might become a majority, and the difficulty of acclimating them, through education, which they wanted to give them and didn't have enough money for.

Teddy Kollek used a very interesting expression which I have heard or read before: they want Israel to be a mosaic rather than a melting pot, which was the ambition of the Americans, and which may be a mistake. In the early days of the United States, of course, they had waves of Irish and Italians and Germans and so on. They became part of the communities in which they settled. But now it's not the same, because of the Negro question, the Mexican-American question, the difficulty of the Puerto Ricans in New York, and an effort now to keep their own identity rather than try to merge with the white people.

Nathan: I suppose possibly Jews can understand this.

Haas: Jews can understand this better than anybody, but on the other hand, the Negroes have turned against the Jews, which is not understandable at all, since the Jews were the first people to realize the inequities under which the Negroes lived and tried to help. And now they've turned against us. The reason, I'm told, is Jewish landlords, but it goes much deeper than that, I suppose. I suppose everybody has to have a scapegoat.

Nathan: That may be. Everything changes. Maybe this will change too.

It was fascinating that you have seen the state developing. I gather that you and your husband have been interested in the Jewish Welfare Fund.

Haas: Oh, very deeply. We're much more interested in that than we are in the bond drive. Our roots are in Judaism, and we have the greatest admiration for Israel. We want to help as much as we can, but we

- Haas: would rather help through the Federation, than to be great bond-buyers, although we do buy bonds too. I think bonds appeal to people who are more closely affiliated with Israel, emotionally-- although we are too, but not in the same way. I can't explain what I mean.
- Nathan: Is it, perhaps, that yours isn't a Zionist view, although it's a sympathetic and an interested one?
- Haas: Yes. Yes. I have not the Zionist view at all. If things happened, I would be very glad to go there, to have a land to go to, but I doubt that--I hope that won't happen. Our affiliation is very close to the Federation and always has been. In fact my husband was president at one time, and Peter is greatly involved.

Aspects of Art and Music

- Nathan: Were you at all aware of Israeli art? That is, whatever art is being produced?
- Haas: I haven't been too enthusiastic, but then I haven't been enthusiastic about a lot of things that are being done now. I don't know that Jewish art has any particular characteristic. I think that art nowadays is not in any way characterized by the nationality of the artist.

Many Japanese are painting the way Western artists do, and the idiom seems to be about the same, universally, of what I've seen. I don't know that India is doing anything in modern art, and certainly I don't imagine there is an artist in China now. (Laughing) And of course they have Black artists, characterized as such. But I just think that the fact that they're Black doesn't make them paint differently.

- Nathan: That's interesting, isn't it?
- Haas: Maybe I'm speaking from ignorance, but I don't think so.
- Nathan: In addition to art, I gather that you do keep your interest in musical life.
- Haas: Oh yes, I love music though most contemporary music jars me. As a little boy of eight once wrote in his concert notebook, "It worries me so." Technically, I know very little. I once told Ernest Bloch, "I just don't understand. I look at a program, I know I have heard this work before, at least five or ten times. And

Haas: until it starts I don't know what it's going to sound like." He answered, "Oh, don't worry about it. It's just a lapse between mind and ear." [Laughter] But, you know, it really makes me feel rather stupid. Of course I've heard the Tchaikovsky concerto that Isaac Stern played so divinely yesterday. But until he started I didn't know what it was going to sound like. Then it was completely familiar to me, as so many things are, because I've heard them all so often. I have also heard all the great opera singers of the past: Caruso, Geraldine Farrar, Scotti, and many others. When we visited New York, my grandfather used to take me to the opera regularly on Friday nights. It took me a long time to enjoy Wagner. There was a great furor after the war, when Kirsten Flagstad was engaged to sing in our opera, because she had collaborated with the Nazis. In fact, I think she was married to a Nazi.

Nathan: I might ask whether you and your family have taken an interest in promising young musicians or artists, and whether you act as a patron or sponsor?

Haas: Well, not in the way one would do as a formal sponsor, as Mrs. Ehrman did for Yehudi Menuhin or Miss Lutie Goldstein did for Isaac Stern. I don't know whether it was my husband and myself, or the Dan Koshlands, or all of us, who fostered someone who is the daughter of an employee at Levi Strauss. I don't know what's become of her. However, the last two years I have given a hundred scholarships, (a nominal sum) to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. They wanted to give some musical training there to minority groups.

Nathan: I gather that you know Milton Salkind and Peggy?

Haas: I don't know her but I know him. I think he has raised the Conservatory to great heights. On Ruth Lilienthal's eightieth birthday the whole family, the Daniel Koshlands and their children and Walter and myself and our children established a scholarship there in her honor. Though it was a year late, [laughter] she was very pleased.

In the last two years, I have seen the extraordinary Chinese exhibition, currently in San Francisco. I saw it in Paris, briefly in Toronto and now here. I am so sorry Walter and I did not go to China on our honeymoon as several of our friends did. But I am not sure that I would have appreciated the greatness of their art then as I do now.

And of course you know all about our connections with Ernest Bloch and the University of California. And I am on the Board of Governors as Secretary, the Executive Board of the Symphony.

Nathan: Yes. I assume then that you do know Seiji Ozawa.

Haas: No, he does not want to socialize.

Nathan: That's very interesting.

Haas: I think he's right. Why should he waste his time? His whole life is music and he's one of the most inspirational, wonderful musicians that I have ever heard. What he gets out of an old warhorse of Tchaikovsky makes it entirely new. And it isn't a different interpretation, it's the vitality and the understanding that he puts into it.

I think he's done wonders for the orchestra. I believe Krips is responsible for their very fine discipline.

Nathan: One of the things that's interested us in attending symphony performances on the campus, is that with Ozawa, many, many more students are there.

Haas: Oh yes, and he's packed the Opera House for the first time. One hardly sees any empty seats. We used to be only half full on the Wednesday night performances; the Friday night performances were much better attended. But now there's standing room only for most of those concerts. It's very exciting.

Nathan: I wondered also whether you were at all interested in the Western Opera Theatre.

Haas: No, I've never taken part in that at all. Of course we have used Western Opera at the Stern Grove Concerts, but I'm not on their board nor that of Spring Opera, either.

Madeleine Russell and my husband and I two or three years ago established a symphony chair in honor of Philip Boone, who had done such a remarkable job in bringing the Symphony to its present excellence.

Another chair was given by the Symphony Forum.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SERVICE

Nathan: Would you want to go back a little in time to the World's Fair, in 1939?

Haas: Oh yes. I was chosen one of the nine members of the Women's Committee or Board. It was called the Yerba Buena Club.

Yerba Buena Club, Golden Gate International Exposition

Haas: We were elected by the board of directors of the Fair as founders of the Women's Clubhouse Association. According to their by-laws I was "entitled to all the privileges of a founder and member of the Yerba Buena Club at the Golden Gate International Exposition."

Mrs. Henry P. Russell was president of the association, and I was secretary. Among some of the functions that we gave was a luncheon in honor of the President of the United States. The club was used, essentially, for entertaining purposes. Our board sent out invitations for a lecture by Mlle. Eve Curie, in 1939. This is the value of keeping a scrapbook. I never would have remembered any of this!

The Yerba Buena Club was built and operated exclusively by women for the comfort and convenience of visitors to the Exposition. "There you will lunch, tea, dine, dance, meet your friends, attend lectures and meetings, and entertain. The club will be your social headquarters, as well as a place to rest and relax, receive your mail, and messages." It was furnished by Frances Elkins, and was very, very beautiful. No one, in my opinion, had as beautiful taste as Frances.

Nathan: How did people become members?

Haas: There were no memberships. The clubhouse was for the use of visitors. There was a board of directors with officers--quite a number of directors.

There are a great many well-known names among them. That project was really the beginning of my friendship with Mrs. Helen Crocker Russell, whom I liked and admired very much. Later we came together again on the Women's Board of the Museum of Art.

This is a picture of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt receiving the members of the Women's Board. Mrs. E.S. Heller was seated next to her when we were being photographed, and she said, "Elise, you come and take my seat. I don't want to have my profile taken." Well, I never liked that particular angle of my face either, but how could I refuse?

Nathan: But that's really lovely.

Haas: These are letters that I have received. During the war, I kept my "A" mileage ration, although I worked for the Red Cross. I've gotten into the war now, I guess.

Nathan: Fine.

Haas: Well, I took typing lessons for three months, thinking I would need it in whatever job I volunteered for. My first job was given to me by my friend, Margaret Sloss, who was a member of the board that distributed used clothing. And so Aline Gunst and I, two of the most fastidious women in San Francisco, sorted old clothes in the basement of a house on Jackson Street, wearing white gloves and white smocks. [Laughter]

Nathan: Quite an image.

The Nomura Luncheon

Nathan: In a different aspect of your life, I recall that your husband was president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, in '40 or '41?

Haas: Yes. It must have been then.

Nathan: Was it on this occasion that you had reason to meet some members of the diplomatic corps?

Haas: Well, yes, during his administration and for quite a number of years afterwards. We had new friends which made life quite interesting. We made friends with those that we liked and saw them quite often.

Haas: I did talk to you about the luncheon he gave for Rear Admiral Nomura?

Nathan: Yes, but not in detail.

Haas: You know, such funny incidents happen. Well, first of all the Chamber of Commerce gave an official lunch to welcome Admiral Nomura to San Francisco. He was on his way to Washington to assure the President that Japan was not going to enter the war. And that was just three days before Pearl Harbor!

Nathan: That makes you historic participants.

Haas: When the war was over I remember our children making a record of the supposed lunch for Admiral Nomura and the speeches they thought had been made--as a big spoof on the whole incident.

After the war we were in Japan for a month, which was one of the most enjoyable trips I have ever made. Admiral Nimitz, who admired Admiral Nomura as a very great admiral and person, even though he was his enemy and defeated him, must have written to him that we were going to be at the Imperial Hotel. Admiral Nimitz and his wife, as I think I've said before, were very great friends of my parents.

One day we had an appointment for lunch with someone and my husband and I were getting ready to go out, when the desk called up, "Admiral Nomura is calling on you." And my husband said, "I'm terribly sorry, but we are in a rush. We're going out for lunch." And it seems they had sent him up, and he was waiting for us at the little desk which is on each floor. We rushed past this very tall Japanese admiral standing there waiting to be ushered in. It was one of those unforgiveable things.

I think men have very little sense about what is proper on such an occasion!

Nathan: Did you ever see Admiral Nomura after that?

Haas: No. But I insisted on my husband's writing a letter of deep apology, and I think we got an answer from him of some kind. I don't remember what was said, but it helped save face for everybody.

Blood Donor Service: World War II

- Haas: Then--I don't know quite how it happened, I was asked to join the Blood Donor Service, which was then housed in the California School of Fine Arts. Mrs. Gardner Dailey, whom I knew, was the head of it. It was somewhat more independent of the Red Cross than some of the other groups. Mrs. George Cameron, I remember, was head of the Motor Corps. I went in as a Gray Lady, and the next thing I knew, I found myself in charge of blood donorships.
- Nathan: Now, perhaps just a word about the way the group blood donorships worked?
- Haas: It was my job to contact various firms and ask for volunteers among their employees. We would transport them to the Blood Donor Center and they would give their pint of blood, all very proudly. This was a very, very useful service.
- Nathan: And you had a staff there who knew how to take the blood and to care for it?
- Haas: Oh, yes.
- Nathan: It was a professional staff?
- Haas: Definitely yes. The Gray Ladies were the women who ushered the patients in and allayed any fears they might have, but the staff was professional. The outgrowth of it all was the establishment of the Irwin Blood Donor Center, which was located in the old Irwin House on Washington and Laguna Streets until that beautiful house was torn down and apartments built. I don't know where the Blood Donor Center is located now.
- Nathan: Was that the start of the blood bank operation in San Francisco?
- Haas: I think so, but I may be giving you a lot of misinformation.
- Nathan: This is recounted as you recall it; we'll hope the researchers will go further and look up the records. Did you have to do a certain amount of publicizing also?
- Haas: That wasn't really my job. I think the publicity was handled by the Red Cross. We handled the groups assigned to us and transported them to the Center. I used to come up from the country with my husband every morning, five days a week. We had a little Austin, I remember, which we kept in the Union Square Garage. From there, I'd drive out to the Blood Donor Center and come back and leave the Austin and take the train home, so I really never used any more gasoline than the "A" entitled me to.

Haas: During the war we had a wonderful English cook. She was a little "Miss Five by Five," and she had the handling of all the rations for everybody. Everybody got their fair share, the domestics, ourselves, any friends we were able to have.

I told you about Pearl Harbor--oh, haven't I? Well, my Aunt Elise arrived in San Francisco that infamous Sunday morning on one of her periodic visits to see her son, who was living here with my parents. I asked my son Peter if he would go down to the Huntington Hotel with me and call on her. When we got into the elevator of the hotel, we saw in huge headlines in the "extra's" being delivered: "Manila and Pearl Harbor Bombed by the Japanese." Peter, who had been air-minded practically since his childhood, exclaimed, "Manila, maybe--Pearl Harbor, never. They couldn't reach that far," forgetting they had aircraft carriers.

Nathan: Most of us forgot that too.

Haas: We went upstairs, shocked and unbelieving. We told my aunt. It was a very brief visit, because I wanted to get home. No sooner in the house, I turned on the radio just as Stephen Early was announcing this ghastly news to the nation. Shortly after, my husband came bounding up the stairs from the game of golf that he'd been playing with his cronies, and said, "Is this rumor I have heard true?" And I said, "Yes, I just heard it from the White House."

So what did we do but go up on the roof, which had a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean. We heard that there were bombers approaching, and we wanted to see! [Laughter] Such idiots! Well, Walter's friends soon joined him, and somehow or other Ethel got some lunch together. After lunch my husband solemnly took me into his bathroom closet there, unearthed his World War I pistol, and handed it to me. He said, "I am going down with some of my friends to the city hall to see if there's anything we can do, and if you have any trouble, just protect yourself with this." I said, "For heaven's sake, take that thing away! I'd be too frightened to think of using it!"

Then one of his red-headed Irish friends, Jim Hearst, spoke up. He had known that I suspected our poor old Japanese laundryman, who had been with us for years, but who always kept his door locked. I was convinced that he was a Japanese spy.

Nathan: Now, this was down in the country?

Haas: No, this was in San Francisco. And so Jim Hearst came to me and said, "If you have any trouble in the basement, just send for me." [Laughter] The poor old man was probably completely upset and frightened. I'm sure he wasn't a spy. But I had been brought up on the Hearst "Yellow Peril," in my youth, you know. By two o'clock

Haas: that afternoon, the city had roped off the Japanese section of town so that nobody could get out and nobody could get in, and the Japanese were protected. A quick bit of work.

We were expecting some friends for dinner that evening. Marian and Edgar Sinton were to drive up from the country. We didn't know if they could make it during the blackout or not. Luckily we had rather heavy draperies in the dining room, as impenetrable as the blackout curtains we put all over the house. We didn't turn on the lights, and we all huddled together at one end of the dining room with candles. How the Sintons made their way up from San Mateo and through Golden Gate Park without headlights on, I don't know, but they arrived, as did all our guests. We had dinner, and it was a rather strange one, as you can imagine, but I have no remembrance of being frightened.

Of course, at the time there was a good deal of hysteria, and that occasioned the--I forget what it's called, because I haven't the book now--the Executive Order Number something or other. Later, there was an exhibition at the De Young Museum of photographs taken of the relocation of the Japanese and the Nisei, which I think was the greatest wrong this country ever perpetrated on a people, because in Hawaii, where they had many Japanese, there was not one incident of trouble. A friend of ours had a Japanese servant of long standing. He was considered one of the suspects, and was sent to the camp where all those suspected of possible spying were sent. But for the others, they chose such dreadfully hot places in the desert, where there was nothing. The pictures are quite pathetic. We have a letter from Nishi. I cry whenever I read it. Really it is a shameful blot on this country that we did such a cruel thing.

Nathan: Yes, that's true.

Did you stay with the Blood Donor activities pretty much during the war?

Haas: Yes, as I remember. The last summer, I served as a Grey Lady in a hospital near Redwood City and was there on D Day. What a thrill. Everyone who could, came excitedly into the halls. I have here a very nice article, saying, "Perhaps the most successful of the individual projects has been recruiting within the schools. Not only have over 7,000 actual donations been made through the school program, but it has provided a worthwhile project for student participation in the war effort. Mrs. Haas and the members of the recruiting committee have approached each recruiting project thoroughly and systematically." Well, then it says some nice things about me.

Nathan: I assume you approached Levi Strauss somewhere along the line?

Haas: Oh, I'm sure I did.

Mt. Zion Hospital

Nathan: (It's an interesting scrapbook, because you do have some good specific things, that tend to disappear otherwise.) I was wondering whether your knowledge of the blood donor program led to your interest in the Mt. Zion project.

Haas: I started there when Bert Guggenheim became president.

Nathan: Oh, yes. Now please correct me, if any of these notes are wrong. This indicates that you were president of Mt. Zion Hospital Medical Center from 1938 to 1940, that you were a member of the board of directors from 1933 to 1948, and that then your husband was a member of the board from 1948 to 1954. Then Peter and Rhoda had served on the board--

Haas: And she's on the board again.

Nathan: Yes, then she came back as of 1971--

Haas: [Ed. note: The following comments were updated in 1975.] This year, 1975, she has been elected President of the Board of Directors. She has many more problems to face than I did. And the recent strike of the anesthesiologists was not only crippling to all the hospitals in the city, but caused Mt. Zion's already tremendous deficit to increase every day.

Rhoda is wonderful, however. She keeps her sense of balance in every situation, is highly intelligent and very tactful. People like her, which is a great help. She said to me the other day, "If I can think a problem through, then I can handle it." She has developed from an enchanting child into a lovely, lovable, highly able and attractive young woman who never "loses her cool," whatever the situation may be. Everyone admires and loves her.

We have cause to be very proud of all our children. (What an absurd name for adults!) Walter is an extrovert, attractive, and like his father and Peter, he has a great sense of humor. Peter, long overshadowed, has come into his own at last. Everyone who knows him, who has worked with him, loves and admires him. He is all heart--my heart too. Yet he has been the one to suffer all the hard knocks. Perhaps that is why he is so mature.

Nathan: These are very interesting insights.

Would you like to get back to Mt. Zion's rebirth, so to speak?

Haas: Yes. Bert Guggenheim really revitalized the hospital (which, when he took over as president, was a poor hospital), and he got, as chiefs of staff, the most prominent doctors in town--many of whom

Haas: were not Jewish. This was the first time it had happened. He got Dr. Roy Briggs, as chief of the medical department, and Dr. Reginald Knight Smith, whom we all called "All-night" Smith, as head of obstetrics. And of course Dr. Harold Brunn, who was Jewish, as head of surgery, and chief of staff. Bert Guggenheim also re-animated the Women's Auxiliary and asked Margaret Sloss to take the chairmanship. Margaret asked me if I would be vice-chairman. I said, 'Well, if it means no responsibility at all,' because I just wasn't prepared to take any responsibility at that time. And I ended up as President of the Board of Trustees! [Laughter]

Nathan: Famous last words!

Haas: But that was much later, of course. Anyhow, I made a great friend there, who is dead now, the chief nurse of the out-patient department, Miss Ethel Pellé. She was really a wonderful woman. She never lost her sympathy and her understanding of human beings, and you know that dealing with the indigent sick sometimes hardens people a little. Though she was a very brusque and business-like person, she had a warm heart and she was highly intelligent. During the war she left her post to go over and work at the medical center across the Bay where they were doing ship-building.

Nathan: Oh, in Richmond?

Haas: Yes. Later, she came back to the hospital in San Francisco where the ship-building was going on. This was the time when the great influx of Negroes came to San Francisco, and she had a great deal to do with them. She told me one day, "The poor whites from the South are more ignorant than the Negroes, and they have no idea how to look after their children, how to feed them, how to do anything."

Nathan: Isn't that interesting? She must have been an unusual person.

Haas: Yes, she was. To go back, Margaret put Esther Ehrman and me in charge of volunteers for the out-patient department. Esther never woke up until 11 o'clock in the morning, which made it a little difficult for me! And as you can imagine, people would ring the night before that they couldn't come the next morning, and I'd spend my evening on the phone trying to replace them. Well, finally Walter got very tired of this, and said, "You really can't spend your evenings this way. It's not pleasant for me, and it's not pleasant for you." So I suggested that the hospital engage a half-time paid person who would be responsible for the replacements, which worked very nicely.

Nathan: About how many people did you need to staff the out-patient service?

Haas: I honestly don't remember, but it was about six or eight, or ten. It was a chore, an awful chore. I learned a lot about people's sense of responsibility. There were some who really took their jobs

Haas: seriously, and some who didn't. But on the whole it was a very good way of helping out, and it was also a very good way of interesting people in the hospital.

Later, I was put on the board of directors. Then I was appointed to the most interesting of all committees, the Joint Conference Committee, which was composed half of trustees and half of doctors, so that each understood the problems of the other. This is really very important. At that time we had as director of the hospital, a certified public accountant of all people, who really didn't understand hospital problems at all! [Laughter] Because of that--and I've had the same experience in another organization--because of his incompetency in medical matters, the doctors and the directors both worked very hard, and the directors were much more involved in the hospital than they would have been if they had had a really competent director, whose policies they would have confirmed, but they might not have understood the problems so well.

Then when so many of the doctors went off to war, I was elected president. At one time before that, when we were looking for members of the board of directors, my husband suggested a man named Mr. Leon Goldstone, whom he and Dan Koshland knew, and had tried very hard to interest in charitable organizations. Mr. Goldstone and his brother didn't seem to know much about giving and my husband thought it would be a good education for him to be connected with a non-profit organization like the hospital.

When I took office, I said, "I know nothing about finance whatsoever. I will leave all this to the finance committee." Mr. Goldstone was made a member of that committee and got very involved, and came to the hospital every single day to look over the books and the bills. He simply didn't understand deficit spending. He said, "I've never been connected with a business that was in the red." I replied, "Well, it's up to you to try and get it out of the red." Of course we couldn't do that. You have to have a certain percentage of occupancy to break even. I remember when my term expired (it was a revolving board then) he wrote me a letter and said, "When you took office, the deficit was \$87,000. As you leave office, the deficit is \$150,000!" [Laughter] This amused me no end. I spent an entire morning composing a letter in reply, which in essence said, "I realize that the deficit increased greatly during my administration. Of course, knowing nothing about finance, I had left it all to my finance committee, of whom you are a member. However, I think that I accomplished more than increasing the deficit, because it was during my regime that the Harold Brunn Cardiovascular Research Project was established, and to me research is more important than deficits which can be made up."

Haas: This was one of the most interesting things that happened. Dr. Fishbein, who was then editor of the American Medical Association Journal, came out to San Francisco and a dinner was given in his honor. He came out to the hospital and Dr. Brunn and I showed him around. He was an extraordinarily voracious reader. He read every medical paper that was published in the United States. He would read by scanning a whole page. He said to Dr. Brunn and myself, "You have two very promising young cardiologists here. I've read their papers, and I think they will really make a name in the profession. One is John Sampson, and the other one is Harold Rosenblum." This instantly sparked an idea in Dr. Brunn's mind. He was very creative, and so the idea came to him to establish a research center for cardiology.

It was up to me to implement this. It really is extraordinary how it came about. I knew of a convalescent fund of \$50,000 that had been given by Samuel Wormser and his sister, which had not been used, so I went to them and I said, "Would you mind if we turned it to a different purpose?" They said, "No." I explained of course what the purpose was. We had a one-story building next to the old Mt. Zion Hospital, and on top was a tennis court for the interns, which Mrs. John Walter had given. I went to her and said, "Florence, there's now a playground within a block of Mt. Zion which has tennis courts, and we have this great project of establishing a cardiological research center. We would like to build a story on that building, whose foundations will hold it. We will put a plaque in memory of your husband, Jack, at the front door of the building." And she said, "Oh, that's quite all right," and never gave a cent to the hospital after that.

We started, and we got enough money to put up the one story for the research department. I got a pledge of \$5,000 from three different people, Mr. Guggenheim, Mrs. Russell, and ourselves. That was the budget that they ran on for five years. I forget the name of the first director; Dr. Meyer Friedman replaced him. He is now just about to retire (1977) after having brought himself, the Center and his colleague, Dr. Ray Rosenman, to national recognition. And they have gotten millions from the government.

Nathan: From the National Institutes of Health?

Haas: Yes. Just recently, their research has been summarized by the publication of a book called Type A Behavior and Your Heart [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974]. It is a best seller and is now to be had in paperback. All this sparked by a chance remark! Of course, many, many years of research and many medical papers preceded this "popular" book, and Dr. Friedman still credits me with the founding of the clinic. He said to me the other day, "I came in when you were president, and I go out when your daughter becomes the president."

Nathan: Well, it must be very gratifying to know that you have given a push--

Haas: Yes, I've given a push to a lot of things, because I like to give a push to things. I don't like humdrum everyday anything!

Nathan: Yes. I might just ask you a little more about this research institute. It was run by--

Haas: Dr. Meyer Friedman and Dr. Ray Rosenman.

Nathan: Right. Now, isn't it Dr. Ray Rosenman who has been doing a good deal of work on stress and cholesterol?

Haas: I think that--maybe it's he, but I hear about it from Meyer Friedman. They selected groups of men who were under stress, whom they are trying to prove, and feel they have proven, are more prone to heart attacks than the easy-going type. I think they feel that this has more to do with heart attacks than anything else. We have a friend who's a patient of his who is in his seventies, who walks five miles a day, or swims, and exercises, and all that kind of thing.

Nathan: These are really long-term studies that go on over a period of years?

Haas: Oh, yes, and he sends me every single paper that is published. At first I tried to read them. Then I collected them, but I know they're well collected there. He's always been touchingly appreciative of the part that I had in establishing this, which is extremely nice.

U.C. and the Haas International Award

Nathan: That must be very gratifying.

In connection with another of your interests, the University of California at Berkeley, whenever Charter Day comes around I think of the award named in honor of you and your husband, the Haas International Award. Do you have occasion to meet the people who receive the awards?

Haas: At first we made a point of having them for cocktails, and of course we always heard them speak at the Charter Day dinner. In the last years, the distinguished selection committee has had a narrower choice. We just received a letter--suggesting some

Haas: possible changes--which I have not yet had time to read. As I remember, Mr. Galo Plaza was one of the most noted of the people selected. He went on to bigger and better things.

Nathan: That was Inter-American affairs, wasn't it? That's his big field.

Haas: Yes. And we were invited to President and Mrs. Hitch's Wednesday night, but we couldn't go. All our children were there, and of course the chancellors from all the other campuses, and Mr. Jacques Cousteau, whom I really would have liked to meet. And I'm sorry I didn't hear him speak yesterday.

We met the award winner for this year, and his wife, who is charming. They are very nice people. We had cocktails down at the Palace Hotel with our regular dinner group, which has been somewhat decimated, and replacements have been put in.

Mr. Christopolous brought the award winner and his wife up for cocktails with our Charter Day dinner guests; so we had a chance to talk to them. Our daughter and son-in-law had taken them over to the Hitches, so they got a chance to get to know them. We really should entertain the award winners, but somehow or other we have gotten a little careless about those things.

Nathan: I'm sure they must think very well of you. The award is really very exciting--

Haas: It's a wonderful thing for our children to have done.

Nathan: They did that, did they?

Haas: Yes, on our fiftieth wedding anniversary, in 1964. It is an award given to someone from a foreign land who has distinguished himself greatly in his own country, and has spent a year or more at the University of California. So it ties us in with the rest of the world. We've had quite distinguished award winners.

Nathan: Do you participate in selecting the winners?

Haas: We are given the curriculum vitae of individuals, and each have one vote, but it is the aforementioned panel that selects the names and its members make the final decision.

Nathan: I was interested that you mentioned the Charter Day dinner, and wondered whether you had come to the campus for Charter Day.

Haas: No, I didn't, because I wanted very much to hear Isaac Stern play in San Francisco.

Nathan: And what a review he had.

Haas: I haven't even had time to read it, but the concert was pure joy. It was a perfect marriage between the conductor, the orchestra, and a very great violinist. I don't think anyone today can touch him. Jascha Heifetz doesn't play any more, I mean, doesn't concertize any more. He was at the top of my totem pole, and Isaac is, I think, as great.

Nathan: So you really enjoyed the concert.

Haas: Oh, it was so wonderful you were transported.

Nathan: Was it the Tchaikovsky Concerto?

Haas: Yes. Even though it has been heard a thousand times, this performance was as fresh as though it were new. Really wonderful. He's a very fine person himself, as a human being. And he remembered my mother as being a very great lady, a type that hardly exists any more. He is going to open the Stern Grove concerts this year, to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the San Francisco Symphony, and Leon Fleischer is going to be the conductor.

Concerts for Young People

Nathan: Now, would you want to talk a bit about concerts for young people?

Haas: Yes, I had a request from the symphony association to tell them the year that these started, because they seem to have lost some of their records. Unless I delved through a great many of my daily reminders, I was not able to remember. I remember when I ceased to be on the board, which was either in '37 or '39, and I received an engraved silver platter.

A group of six women including myself had formed ourselves into a board and collected money for Children's Concerts. When our money ran out, the San Francisco Symphony Association was making a collection of money, and I felt very strongly that our organization--small as it was--should not compete. I also felt that we should have Ernest Schelling as the conductor of a short series and the whole thing be under the auspices of the San Francisco Symphony. (The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra had been founded by the Musical Association; in 1951 it was changed to the San Francisco Symphony Association.) Feeling this way, I got on my feet, expressed my thoughts and said, "I do not want to be disruptive in any way, and since the rest of you may not agree with me, I hereby offer my resignation from this board." To my great surprise, another woman in the group got up and said, "I agree completely with Mrs. Haas, and I too resign from this board." At

Haas: this, all but one woman said they thought my idea was a good one and they should join me in it.

They appointed me to approach Mr. Richard Tobin, the president of the San Francisco Symphony Association, to suggest that the big symphony give a series of concerts for children, and that Ernest Schelling, who conducted such concerts in New York, do the same here for two to four weeks. My husband and I offered to pay Mr. Schelling's salary for two years if this plan were adopted, since I felt we should have the best. Mr. Tobin listened with interest, as I remember, consulted his committee, and the plan was accepted.

He told us that they would all welcome this, and that he would form a separate committee consisting of the then board of the young people's concerts, and the only person left out, of course, was the executive director, Mrs. X. There was no place for her, because they already had a manager, and they would forgive us our \$3,000 debt, which was more than we had expected.

Mrs. X came up to see me, and poured invective over my head for an hour, but I managed to survive. Ernest Schelling had been giving young people's concerts in New York, with notebooks and questions and answers for each concert. There were to be four concerts. We thought he would be the right person to start if off, so after my husband and I subsidized him for two years, the Symphony took him over, and when he left, Rudolph Ganz took his place.

I was reminded of it the other day when I was looking through some of my things and I found a beautiful framed photograph of Schelling inscribed to me. On the broad silver frame engraved in his own handwriting were motifs from works that he had conducted. Recently, I presented it to the Symphony.

They wanted me to be chairman of the [young people's concerts] committee, but I refused because it might have looked as though I had upset the applecart for my own benefit, which of course was not true. Mrs. Harold McKinnon was the chairman. I remained on the committee for 15 years.

Later, many years later, the whole conception of the young people's concerts was changed and they no longer had the notebooks. An annotator or the conductor explained the music, the make-up of the orchestra and things like that, because they wanted to make these concerts available to all the children of the city and felt that by doing it this way instead of a series of four concerts, more children were able to listen to music. But I don't think as many children got to understand music, as did when we had the more restricted and intensive study of the concerts.

Nathan: What ages were the children who came originally to the concerts?

Haas: Oh, every age except very small children.

Nathan: Grammar school and high school?

Haas: Grammar and high school, yes. The admission was 50 cents. Now I think it's \$1.50, which isn't too much higher, but makes a difference.

Nathan: Were they brought in a group from the school?

Haas: As I remember, yes. The notebooks were really very interesting. The one that pleased me the most was by a little boy of eight. For one of the concerts, the first half was modern music, of that time, and the second was classical music. One of the questions was, "Which do you like best? modern or classical?" And this little boy wrote, "I like classical music best, because modern music worries me so." [Laughter] That was a perfect description of my feelings too! You know, it does stir you up. It is not soothing.

Nathan: Nothing ever gets resolved!

Haas: Nothing ever gets resolved. That was my connection with the young people's concerts. I guess that was the first innovation I ever tried. But innovations have always interested me. When I felt something wasn't being done right, I wanted very much to solve it.

Merola and the Singers' Competition

Nathan: I also have a note to ask you about the Gaetano Merola performance party at Fair Oaks. Does this ring any bell?

Haas: The only bell it rings is that I think Merola conducted his first opera down at Stanford, and after the performance my parents gave a party in his honor on their tennis court at Fair Oaks. I don't remember the year. I don't know how they got to know him, but he became one of my mother's very good friends and was on the original Stern Grove committee. Before that, of course, our San Francisco Opera was formed with Merola as conductor.

He and his wife used to be guests of my parents very often.

Nathan: Was it through the Opera Association that the competition for new young singers was named after him?

Haas: Yes. They appear every year at the Grove, at a concert. Lucine Amara is one of the winners who has gone on to fame, but she never admits that she first sang for the public at Stern Grove.

Nathan: I should think it would be a rather nice memory.

Haas: I agree. And for years Amara's father used to come every Sunday until he was an old man and long after she had achieved fame and moved away. He would slip quietly into a seat in mother's Grove "box" and listen quietly to the performance. He died a while ago, I think, because we do not see him there any more.

Stern Grove and the Concerts

Nathan: Let's talk a little about Stern Grove, if you'd like to. Wasn't it one of your mother's accomplishments?

Haas: Yes. Among her many accomplishments, the greatest was the purchase in 1931 or 1932 of a beautiful natural amphitheatre in memory of my father. Old John McLaren, who built Golden Gate Park on San Francisco sand dunes, showed her the wonderful site, then an apple orchard, on 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. It was originally 25 acres (she later added 40 more acres). She named it Sigmund Stern Grove and gave it to the city under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission.

For a few years, she produced one or two symphony concerts for the purpose of giving work to the symphony musicians, who were unemployed during the summer. She paid for these concerts herself. In 1938, she formed a distinguished committee to help her run a series of symphonies and other musical performances and started to collect money to help defray the then modest expenses. Our immediate family have been the main contributors and now Levi Strauss & Company is becoming greatly involved.

After her death, I took over the chairmanship and added opera performances and jazz concerts. Rhoda is now chairman, and we all hope the family, with help from some of the Levi Strauss people, will carry on these free performances for many, many years. The attendance varies from 7,500 people (an empty house!) to 27,000 each Sunday, in June, July and August.

We used to have an old apple tree which largely shaded the center table. We'd say, "Meet us under the apple tree," and that's where my mother gave her lunches every Sunday. It was always the same menu, but a different audience.

Nathan: What did she like to provide?

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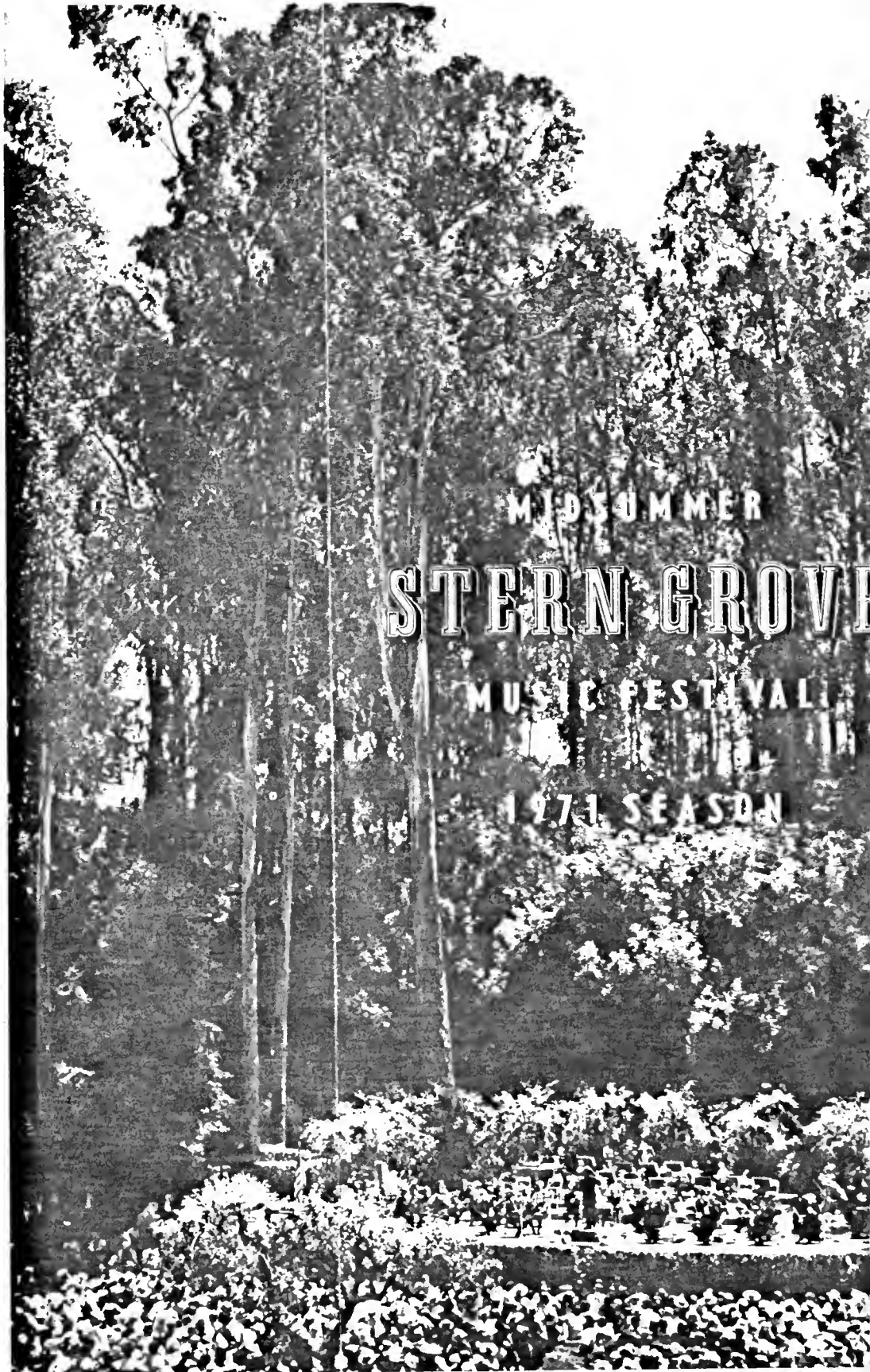
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1355 Market Street, Suite 460
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PROGRAM

SIGMUND STERN GROVE
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SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION AND
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SUNDAYS at 2:00 P.M.

ADMISSION FREE

1971 SEASON

- June 6 CARNIVAL IN SAN FRANCISCO
San Francisco Recreation and Park Department
- June 13 SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY
LEONARD ROSE, 'cello, Soloist
NIKLAUS WYSS, Conductor
- June 20 THE BALLET FOLKLORICO MEXICANO
GRACIELA TAPIA, Director
- June 27 "MUSIC MAN"
Producers Associates of Oakland
H. JAMES SCHLADER, Director
- July 4 SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY
JOSEF KRIPS, Conductor
- July 11 ANNUAL OPERA PERFORMANCE
Produced by the Merola Memorial Fund
Members of the 1971 Merola Opera Program
Stern Grove Festival Opera Orchestra
- July 18 PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND
- July 25 ORCHESTRA CONCERT
Operatic Selections with winners and finalists,
1971 San Francisco Opera Auditions
Stern Grove Festival Symphony Orchestra
KURT HERBERT ADLER, Conductor
- August 1 POPS CONCERT
San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
ARTHUR FIEDLER, Conductor
- August 8 OPERA CONCERT
San Francisco Opera Chorus, Francesco Prestia, Director
Soloist: To be announced
Stern Grove Festival Opera Orchestra
- August 15 AN AFTERNOON WITH FRANKIE LAINE
RAY BARR, Conductor

(Program Subject to Change Without Notice)

Personalities from Bay Area radio and television generously give their personal time to appear each Sunday as hosts for these concerts.

A grant from the Recording Industries Trust Fund, in cooperation with the Musicians Union, Local No. 6, is generously given each year to the Midsummer Music Festival.

Sunday at the Grove

This year, 1971, marks the 33rd year of San Francisco's proud tradition—"Sunday at the Grove"

"The Grove" is Sigmund Stern Grove, a natural amphitheatre sheltered by stately eucalyptus, redwood and fir trees. Located at the corner of 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard, it is one of the West's most beautiful, unspoiled nature spots, preserved in close proximity to the heart of an expanding city.

The tradition "Sunday at the Grove" is the Midsummer Music Festival which annually presents here a series of outdoor performances on Sunday afternoons. Productions run the scale of taste from Broadway to Grand Opera, with orchestral concerts and ballet in between. Since 1938, 436 programs have been given, admission free, to more than 4 million citizens and visitors from all over the world.

Because these programs of pre-eminent quality are free, whole families can attend together, picnic and enjoy the finest in musical entertainment in an unsurpassed outdoor setting. Children and grownups alike have discovered music here for the first time and many artists who have since gone on to fame were first heard at the Grove.

The Grove was given to the City and County of San Francisco in 1931, as a memorial to her husband by Mrs. Sigmund Stern, President of the Recreation Commission (then the Playground Commission) for many years. In 1938 she founded the Stern Grove Festival Association, which, through the support of civic-minded private citizens, has presented the Midsummer Festival at Stern Grove for 33 years.

San Francisco's beautiful Grove, with its internationally famous Midsummer Music Festival, is a fitting memorial indeed to Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Stern.

A limited number of picnic tables may be reserved by calling Mrs. Bernice Rodgers, Recreation and Park Department, 558-4728, 9:00 a.m. on the Monday preceding the concert. Free public parking lots located at Wawona and Vale streets. Take cars K or M, busses 28 or 18.

Haas: Cold chicken, two salads, rolls and fruit or watermelon was the regular fare. Lando, the cook she'd had for twelve years, and whom I inherited and had for twelve years also, was a Filipino. He also used to cook for our tennis friends. He had a lot of help, and nothing was too much for him to do. Those were the Sundays during the summer that my husband and I would invite our friends to come and play tennis. We were still living with my parents. Everyone stayed for lunch, so Lando had two lunches to provide.

Nathan: You were saying earlier that the apple tree was the meeting place at Stern Grove?

Haas: The meeting place, yes. There was a roped off enclosure, with tables in the shape of a horse-shoe, and then chairs. After lunch was over, the chairs would be moved forward, and the guests would enjoy the concerts from there. There were also tables along the terrace that people could engage by calling the Recreation and Park department on the Monday before the concert.

But rumblings used to get to us, "Why were these people privileged--" you know, "--to have a table?" So we had a big sign put up, "Stern Grove Committee." After all, we were the people that worked hard on this thing to put it on. It never really bothered me, and certainly I think my mother was completely unaware of any feeling. There was room for everybody.

Nathan: Right. And the concerts have been held, haven't they, every year since the first one?

Haas: Every year. When we celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the Symphony, and the fiftieth anniversary of the opera, as I think I said earlier, Isaac Stern opened our season at the Grove. The first concert is always dedicated to my mother.

Nathan: That's lovely. I gather Isaac Stern is not a relation?

Haas: No, he is not.

As I mentioned, my mother wanted to think of something to do in memory of my father. She was driving around the city with John McLaren, because as you know she had been on the playground commission many years. (I think she was president for nineteen years. She was reappointed by four different mayors.) She was always interested in buying up all the empty land that she could for playgrounds, without any of my husband's compunction about taking these things off the tax rolls, which he has! But to her, this didn't count. It was more important to give playgrounds to children, than it was for the city to get money from taxes.

I guess she was a pre-environmentalist.

Nathan: Exactly! What vision she had!

Haas: Yes. She always had great vision. She was an amazing woman. John McLaren knew of a sunken amphitheater, and there must have been a road down there, or they may have walked down, for all I know. It was an old apple orchard at the time, owned by the Green brothers. McLaren thought it would make a very good recreational area, and my mother thought it was absolutely beautiful. Of course, the trees were old, but there were quite a few still standing.

She bought it and gave it to the city with the condition that if ever it were not used for recreational purposes, it would return to the Stern Family Fund. So they can't cut through it or take anything off, legally. That was the condition under which it was accepted. It was also understood that no religious or political meetings were ever to be held there. After her death I think there was some occasion of an interdenominational ceremony being held for the United Nations. We pondered for quite a while, and felt it was not an infraction of my mother's desires.

During the war she gave a concert for French and British war relief, and Bruno Walter conducted. He was also a friend whom she entertained, and who admired her very much. I could give you so many more friends and admirers among well-known musicians who really adored my mother.

I think it was either during the war or after that that she was awarded the Ribbon of the Legion of Honor. (I think it's Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.) One of her forebears, of whom I have spoken, Jacob Meyer, with all the leading Jews of France, was summoned to Paris by Napoleon to work out ways to give civil rights to the Jews, such as the right to vote in the French elections, to buy and sell property, to work at any business they chose, together with the right to openly practice their religion, provided they looked upon themselves first as Frenchmen, and then as Jews. For this agreement Jacob Meyer was awarded the Ribbon of the French Legion of Honor. Later my grandfather wore it; his daughter Elise de Souza-Dantas, as well as Florence Blumenthal, Eugene Meyer, Jr. and George Blumenthal also did so. So there were quite a few in our immediate family that had it for service, not only to France, as I mentioned earlier. Of course, with Florence Blumenthal that was quite different, because she had established a fund to subsidize young French artists, unknown artists.

Nathan: That is a remarkable record. Perhaps I might now mention a few dates, to see if any of them suggest something you want to comment on. In 1939 the Stern Grove concerts received support from the city's Publicity and Advertising Fund. In 1942, it was incorporated as a nonprofit, charitable trust. In 1948, it gained support from the Music Performers Trust Fund in cooperation with the Musicians Union Local 6.

Haas: Both the Publicity and Advertising Fund and the Musicians Union have been very helpful. Since these concerts were free to the public as well as educational, the union has supplied us with a certain number of musicians free, which now amounts to 125 a season, apportioned as we wish.

Of course, Local 6 is always given credit for this. My mother used to go down (she was great friends with Pop Kennedy, who was president of Local 6) and pay him a ceremonial visit, accompanied by Mr. Merchant, and make the request in a formal letter. I kept up the custom of paying this formal visit, but now that we have Mr. Albert White as our concert manager, he arranges this and we just write the letter.

After mother's death, I inherited the Grove presidency, knowing nothing, absolutely nothing, about the way it was run. Luckily, the 1956 program was already planned and mother's secretary, who worked only one day a week for the Grove, remained through the 1956 season. Mr. Merchant did everything that Mr. White does now. Though I was a member of the Stern Grove Committee, mother made it very plain that I was far too busy to attend the meetings; this because I came once and made a mild suggestion! So I was a bit handicapped when I, quite unprepared, had to take over. But I managed with the help of Al White as Musical Director and Mrs. Middione as Executive Director. She later resigned and Mr. James Friedman succeeded her and is a great help in every way to Rhoda, who is now chairman.

Maintaining Stern Grove

Nathan: There was a note that apparently Bernard Maybeck had consulted with your mother on the layout of facilities at Stern Grove? Is that right?

Haas: I am not sure. But they do keep the old building out there, which early in its history had a somewhat unsavory reputation. Among other things, that's the building in which Abe Ruef hid for three weeks when they were searching for him.

Nathan: [Laughing] A good historical note.

Haas: Various facilities have been added, but the building, though it has burned twice, has been restored to its original condition. I think it used to have a restaurant, which was respectable on Sundays. Then barbecue facilities were built and last year the Recreation and Park Commission, through the city, gave us a new backdrop, enlarged our storage space, and added another dressing room.

And, of course, they have the physical responsibility for the Grove, keeping it in order.

Nathan: The city does?

Haas: Yes, the city through the Recreation and Park Department. You see, there is a very happy marriage between our private committee and the city commission. The latter, for instance, supply us with the directors who act as ushers and see that nothing untoward happens.

There were very few benches left, because through the years of course they had broken down, so we paid for the additional expense and upkeep with the city and the Stern Grove Festival Association. Walter and I put in the sound system in memory of my mother. We have a very good sound director and were able to make a contract with him, which is not usual.

Nathan: I see. A bit earlier, were you saying that the Stern Grove records are now with the California Historical Society?

Haas: Yes. I give them the annual reports every three or four years. The society condenses them, and they are greatly valued as an important feature of San Francisco life. Speaking of the California Historical Society, they had a director, Mr. Donald Biggs, who somehow knew of my interest in Matisse. He had found, or purchased, three catalogues of exhibitions in Paris, by Matisse. I bought them from him and I believe I gave one or two the San Francisco Museum and kept one myself.

Nathan: These were catalogues of shows of Matisse's work in Paris during his lifetime?

Haas: Yes. In fact, one of my Matisse drawings, called "Marguerite in Three Poses," was used for the cover of one of his exhibitions in Paris many years ago. Marguerite was his daughter, now the widow of Georges Duthuit. I know her quite well.

Proposed Center for the Performing Arts

Nathan: In addition to your continuing interest in Stern Grove, are you also becoming involved with a proposed new arts center for the city?

Haas: I recently attended a meeting at the Mayor's office for a building that we still hope will be built as a symphony hall, or as they call it now, a center for the performing arts.

Nathan: Do you think this center will really be built?

Haas: Well, I don't know. A feasibility study has been made, and was presented and sent to all the members that had been kept on after the first survey of our cultural assets in San Francisco had been made some years ago by McFadyen and Knowles. A somewhat reduced committee--because that was a very large one--was just kept intact. Mr. Zellerbach, Mr. Harold Zellerbach, has never given up his hope that it may be built. But they have to collect between \$10 and \$15 million privately before they can decide. [Memoirist's subsequent note: They now have \$7 million pledged, and the city has given the present parking lot on Grove Street opposite the Opera House, for the building and a garage. It is readily seen that much has happened since I started these memoirs three or four years ago.] [Editor's note: The ground-breaking for the Performing Arts Center took place early in 1978 and the estimate has risen to \$22 million.]

After this had been repeated a few times and discussed, I said, "Well, I think before any decision can be made about the building some personal contacts should be made to see whether this is just on paper or real." And I think that was adopted, and a committee was formed. I was put on, but I begged off, because I'm collecting for another endowment fund, and I did tell Mr. Zellerbach that I wanted to resign from the committee because this is such a long-range plan that I feel they should have a younger person in my place.

However, they did adopt my suggestion, and I think they will probably, before they go ahead with anything, come back with a firm commitment. Only a foundation, I think, can really do this. That's just by way of an aside.

It was very unfortunate that Proposition B did not pass. I don't think there was enough preparation. I think instead of voting on it in June it should have been allowed to cook until November. I feel the public relations people were not perhaps the best they could have had. But worst of all, two people, Mr. Lurie and Mr. Ets-Hokin, were very influential in turning it into a "class versus mass" endeavor, which it was not.

Haas: And as the mayor said, if only two years ago they could pass a \$25 million bond issue to beautify Market Street, he thought it would have been better to have a \$25 million bond issue on this proposal, which will bring much more good to the city. I still don't understand why they are having bricks laid by hand--

Nathan: Are they? I didn't know that.'

Haas: Yes. I mean, how can you spend \$25 million on beautifying Market Street? And why should you? This is the pet project of a very good friend of ours, Mr. Thomas Mellon, whom we both love and admire, but I think the money could have been spent to better advantage. Or at least a good part of it.

THE PRACTICE OF ART

Lessons in Painting and Drawing

Nathan: When you were growing up, did you take art lessons, drawing lessons, anything of that sort?

Haas: Yes, but not when I was young--much later. After one's children are grown and married, I think a woman feels empty and rather useless. Although I was on quite a few boards at the time, I wearied of them and thought I should "cultivate the inner garden." I spoke to a friend of mine, who was a professional painter and she said, "Why don't you take up painting?" I was quite astounded and asked, "What makes you think I could paint?" She answered, "Because you make such beautiful Christmas packages." "A silly reason," I thought, "but perhaps she meant I had a sense of color and form."

One of my friends, Aline Gunst, who had studied art in her youth and knew how to draw, was in a class with Marian Hartwell, who was really a teacher of design. I decided, "Well, I'll try that." Irma, my painter friend, had tried giving me lessons and had done her best with me, but she was really not a teacher. I just couldn't copy, which is not the way to learn anyhow. So I went to Marian Hartwell, who put up the most hideous still lifes for us to draw. Having studied with André L'Hôte, she told us that we must start by delineating the light, dark and middle values of what we were going to draw, and then fill in the objects, or whatever they were. However, since she had a studio which had both north and west light, by the afternoon the values were entirely changed, which was quite frustrating. I decided perhaps my trouble was that I couldn't draw so I joined a class with Jean Varda, a life class at the California School of Fine Arts, as it was then called.

Nathan: How did you hit it off with someone like Jean Varda, who has definitely his own way of living?

Haas: Oh, I was unconscious of that. I liked him. He was the only good teacher, in my opinion, at the school at that time. But what I drew was absolutely dreadful. The flat paper baffled me. One day he stopped and looked at this ghastly thing I had drawn and said to me, "Have you ever done any sculpture?" I said, "No. Why?" He answered, "Because you have a sense of volume." That gave me an idea and I dropped out of the class. I went down town and bought myself two pounds of plastilene, because I didn't have time to keep clay wet, and a small instrument. Of course, I should have bought a book, to know how to start, but I didn't. I looked at this wrapped package for two months, without daring to open it. And then one day I plucked up my courage and with this small piece I made a little head, from memory, of a Eurasian model that I had tried to draw. It was the first thing I had ever done that had pleased me. Then I decided I would try to do her body. It was rather lively. I liked it. I didn't know how to put in the arms, so I left them off.

Nathan: And you modeled it in the plastilene?

Haas: Yes. I didn't know anything about armature, so I stuck it together with toothpicks.

Nathan: About how big was it?

Classes in Sculpture

Haas: Oh, it was small. One day I received a notice from the University of California Press of a book they were printing called The Unfolding of Creative Activity, by Henry Schaefer-Simmern (1948). So I sent for it. Before it arrived, I met my friend, Bella Fleishhacker on the street one day. She had painted all her life, and had a wonderful sense of color. Those paintings of hers which I had seen seemed to float a little. She told me she had a wonderful new teacher named Henry Schaefer-Simmern, and asked me if I would like to see what she had been doing. She felt that she had regressed, but had attained a certain solidity, which she hadn't had before. I went to visit her and found that this was true.

Finally, soon after, I made his acquaintance, and he came once a week to give me lessons in sculpture, and Aline Gunst lessons in painting. I think that's a misstatement. He didn't give lessons. He said, "To educate means to draw out." His theory was that everyone from the age of five up, or maybe before, has creative ability, and children's drawings, crude as they may be, have a real sense of form and color and placement. As they grow older, they see

Haas: that what they do in their own simple and crude way does not look like the objects which they are trying to draw, so they become disgusted and give up art.

He preferred to teach only people who had never studied before, so that he had a fresh field to work on. This outlet, this creative outlet, was an enormous satisfaction to me. I don't think anything has ever given me as much pleasure, and I'm only sorry that when I became president of the San Francisco Museum of Art, I had to give it up. Now I haven't been able to start again. I wish I could-- and maybe some day I will. I tried a bit of painting but that did not give me what sculpture did.

Some of my other friends became interested, and after we had remodeled our house in Atherton in 1950, which included a studio for me, we had classes there for fourteen years, every summer. In the winter, Professor Schaefer-Simmern continued his classes for a time in a classroom in the San Francisco Museum and then later at one of his pupil's homes, as I had not room in my apartment for it.

Nathan: He came down to the country to conduct classes? And was it all sculpture?

Haas: Oh, no. I was the only sculptor. You see, he never taught techniques. We had to struggle with that ourselves. He just made us criticize what we did, and it didn't matter how simple it was, he wouldn't let us stop until we had corrected whatever faults were in it. By faults, I mean lack of structure, such as one spot that drew the eye before you saw the thing as a whole, which was most important. What he drew out of people who had never done anything before was absolutely miraculous. I think my sister-in-law Ruth was the most talented person.

Nathan: Did she paint?

Haas: She either drew or worked in crayon, in the most remarkable way. Her things have all the bigness of her character. Alice Levison, who was not young when she joined the class (in her 90s!), also did remarkable things, in her own individual style. She only got into trouble when she tackled color, but not in her black and white--and she always knew what was wrong when she looked at it. Florence Kaufman, who too had never done anything in the way of art, developed a very delicate and beautiful style of her own, wholly imaginative. Her daughter-in-law Meta did beautiful things. Rosalind Kahn, when she succeeded in what she was trying to do, had a wonderful sense of color. Her things too are quite individual.

People criticized Schaefer-Simmern by saying that every pupil he had did things the same way, but each one in our class had a different expression. Our work was really pure joy, and I sometimes

Haas: used to go to his class just to listen. It's very interesting. He can give you so much.

Nathan: Is he still active as a teacher?

Haas: Well, he's very active now at St. Mary's. He's teaching, and he's collecting things abroad. He has a class that has dwindled rather pitifully here. Marian Sinton took lessons from him, and she's very talented, but she did not like his criticisms.

Nathan: Were these all people who lived in the general area?

Haas: No. Some people came from San Mateo, and some came from San Francisco. Jay Van Fleet was one of the latter. She did the most remarkable birds.

Nathan: Was anyone in your class interested in stitchery and embroidery, or tapestry?

Haas: No, not through him. However, in his book are many designs that look like primitive needlepoint. I'd like to show you his book. Would you like to see it?

Nathan: Yes, I would. I think I read it some time ago. This is what made me think of the stitchery and tapestry done by some of his pupils.

Haas: One of them, Nancy Ross, did some stitchery. She dropped out some time ago and moved away. It was fascinating to work together. I just loved it, and I miss it. I've only got to start again but it can never be the same. By this time several pupils have died; some have moved away. For years it was the most exciting and inspiring thing in my life. I would take Saturdays off, and nobody could come near me. This was when I was in the city. I would listen to the opera and work for five or six hours without knowing I was working. It was such a wonderful fulfillment that made everything else in my life much easier.

You know, creative things do that. This was really one of the greatest and happiest periods of my life.

Although I am strictly an amateur, I won a prize in sculpture in an exhibition at Grace Cathedral, composed entirely of professional artists and was asked to show my work at one of Temple Emanu-El's art shows, where I knew my "Man on a Cross" would stir up controversy--and it did! But Rabbi Hausman was very understanding. I had told him from the first that this was not a

Haas: Crucifixion as it was called at Grace Cathedral against my wishes, so the title was changed. It was meant to convey the acceptance of suffering by man--but though Rabbi Hausman and I each wrote a short explanation of my intent, that did not make it acceptable to most of the congregation. I have always been grateful to him for his understanding of what I meant.

I also had my work accepted in "Women Artists" exhibitions we used to have at the San Francisco Museum of Art. I asked John Sampson once why these very small achievements did not elate me and he answered, "Perhaps you are already waiting or striving for the next plateau."

Developing an Art Collection

Nathan: By the time that you moved into this apartment in San Francisco, did you have most of your art collection complete?

Haas: Oh, no.

Nathan: This has been gradual and longterm?

Haas: Yes. Oh, yes. In the old house, I guess the best things that I had were some Whistlers, some small Whistlers.

Nathan: Were those your own purchase?

Haas: Yes, and a couple of larger things by Brangwyn, which somehow have disappeared. I don't know where they went. They may have gotten lost when we moved to 2100 (Pacific Avenue).

I also had two very large tapestries, Brussels tapestries, which Bruce Porter had found at the City of Paris in their antique department. Bruce loved to prowl around. He turned up one corner of the tapestry, then opened the other up, and they were really beautiful, but very dirty. He told me about them. I bought them and had them cleaned. One hung in the hall at the Lyon Street house opposite the door and the other hung in my living room.

Of course when we moved to the apartment I couldn't use them, so I rolled them up and had them put in my mother's house and they mysteriously disappeared. Only a few months ago, the de Young Museum called me. They had two unclaimed tapestries tagged "Levi Strauss." My long lost tapestries! I remember having sent them to Elizabeth Moses to find out their period, and everyone forgot



ON EXHIBITION

April, 1958

The Art and Collecting Taste of Elise Haas

AS A SCULPTRESS, Elise Haas has made a considerable place for herself in the eight years since she undertook her first venture in figure-modeling. As Mrs. Walter A. Haas, she has long been identified with the gracious life of San Francisco as a hostess and patron of the arts. In the late 1940's she tried her hand at painting, studying with Jean Varda at the California School of Fine Arts. Being somewhat baffled by the painter's materials and problems, she responded to Varda's suggestion that she possessed "a sense of volume" and, with two pounds of plasticene, attempted her first figure. This satisfying experience led her to more ambitious efforts and advanced studies with Henry Schaefer-Simmern at the Institute of Art Education, Berkeley. However, most of her accomplishments have been through exhaustive experimentation leading to castings of works most nearly meeting her intentions. The three pieces in this show have had public appreciation: "Woman" in the 73rd Annual of the San Francisco Art Association (1954), "Girl's Head" in the 75th Annual (1956), and "Crucifix" in the Exhibition of Contemporary Ecclesiastical Arts at Grace Cathedral last December, where it won first prize for sculpture.



The art collection of Mr. and Mrs. Haas contains splendid examples of Matisse, Braque, Derain and Manet, among others of the modern French school. From it we are privileged to view this month "Le Juge" by Rousault, Matisse's oil sketch for "Joie de Vivre," a Picasso still life and "Three Figures in a Room" by Henry Moore.

Haas: about them until this year, when they moved all their tapestries from the Legion of Honor to the de Young. We had just made a gift of a fine Chinese bowl to the de Young, so I felt no compunction in selling the tapestries via Sotheby in Los Angeles.

Nathan: That's quite a story. In addition to tapestries, were you also interested in buying sculpture?

Haas: The first sculpture I ever bought was by Chana Orloff. Do you know her?

Nathan: No, I don't.

Haas: I bought it in Paris, and I liked it very much. I have had it down in the country. It was a portrait of a well-known actress, a Parisian actress, named Maria Lani. I must show you the book my sister-in-law Ruth got me some years later, because Maria Lani had the kind of face that artists love. Picasso did her. Braque did her, and many, many other famous artists. This book has her own photo as the frontispiece. Not one of the paintings or sculptures resembles the photograph, but they all have something of her in it. It's absolutely fascinating. I must show it to you.

Nathan: I would love to see it.

Haas: Let us walk around and see some of our things which I love so much. No one has ever helped me select anything we have. I would often get the opinion of one of the many artists and dealers I know, as to whether I had chosen an artist's good period and whether the price was right, but that is all.

This Derain still life on the library wall over the fireplace is the first painting I bought, and I can't remember the year that I bought it or from whom.

Nathan: That's fruit in a white bowl. Finding that must have been quite a thrill.

Haas: It was.

And then I heard that Madame Orloff was in New York. She had done a portrait of Louise Mendelsohn. I asked her to come out and I commissioned a portrait of my mother. Well, when it was finished we had some people in for tea, to interest them in her work. When the party was over, I said to mother, "I simply hate your so-called 'portrait.'" She said, "I do too." Because in some strange way, the sculptor had turned all my mother's wonderful qualities into their opposite. Her dignity into haughtiness; her sweetness into something-- I really can't tell you just what it was--a sardonic expression, perhaps.

Haas: And when I looked at Louise's again, I found that same tendency, to give a twist to a person's good qualities, which made it almost the opposite, although it was a beautiful work from a sculptural point of view. I also asked her to do a portrait--a sculpture of myself and Rhoda--which I don't like. It's a small one, fortunately! You wouldn't know me, and I just have any little child in my arms.

Bufano did a sculpture of me and the two boys. This was before Rhoda was born. I don't like it either. [Laughter] However, I have a white procelain one which was beautiful in craftsmanship, and which I gave to a friend who admired it, years later. My mother had a bronze of it which I gave to the San Francisco Museum after her death, and later they sold it.

Bruce Porter, who, as I say, prowled around, found a third one in a green finish, which was under a bench in some foundry.

Nathan: Was this the portrait of yourself and the boys?

Haas: Yes. He told me about it. Bufano hadn't paid for it, you see, so they had it. I liked the finish, so I bought that and put it in my walled garden which was built some years later than the house. It looks very nice there.

Nathan: You've mentioned Bruce Porter several times. Can you tell me a little about him?

Haas: Well, he was--I don't know where he came from. He had a very English accent, or a Boston accent. He was married to the sister of the Jameses, William and Henry. But anyhow, Bruce Porter married the sister, and they lived in a charming little house that still exists at the end of the Presidio wall at Pacific Avenue. I don't remember how we became acquainted. A lot of people I knew knew him. He was a man of very great taste. When we first moved into the house on 2255 Lyons Street, I didn't have enough furniture for all the rooms, so I didn't furnish the living room for several years. When it came to furnishing it, I asked him if he would help me. So he "prowled around" and he found some figured linen for the draperies, which he used on the wrong side, converting it into a very beautiful and muted thing.

I had a couch and some chairs, and then of course the French furniture arrived and did the rest.

Nathan: Was he a professional decorator?

Haas: No, he wasn't a professional anything. He was a dilettante, but he could do anything and as I say, he had exquisite taste. Because he wasn't a professional architect, he wouldn't have anything to do with the building of our house, but he had a hand in it.

Haas: I remember buying a set of colored lithographs. Biblical scenes by David Park--which Albert Bender brought to my attention. Albert was always trying to help an artist and a friend.

In the library I have two old chairs that once belonged to my Aunt Elise. They were in a sale, and I saw them and bought them. I was so pleased.

Nathan: How interesting! [Laughing] Did she recognize them?

Haas: I don't think she noticed. I may have told her.

THE STEINS

- Haas: I think I'd like to talk about the Steins, although that may go over to another session.
- Nathan: Oh, yes. By all means, let's begin. While you're thinking, I'll just look at this catalogue of Four Americans in Paris. This is Sarah Stein in the lower right-hand corner.
- Haas: And Mike. Mike is the one next to her. Well, I think I'll go on with that. As everyone knows, the Stein family came from the Middle West and settled in East Oakland. I never knew Gertrude or Leo. Gertrude had been in San Francisco lecturing at a time when I was not here. The Michael Steins built the first flats in San Francisco, which still exist on the corner of Washington and Lyon Streets.

She was a Miss Solomon, and belonged to my mother's vintage. Mike Stein, at one time of his life--I think it's probably all in there and can be verified--was an official of the Market Street Railway. There was a strike. He found himself on the side of the strikers. He came home and said, "Sarah, I have no place in management. Let's go abroad for two years." They stayed thirty-three, with one visit to San Francisco.

They brought back some Matisse drawings, which they showed to various friends, among them Albert Bender. However only one was bought and that was by someone, I think, in New York.

They first went to Florence, I believe, and bought some Italian furniture. I have a picture of them outside the shop of the man who was preparing it for them.

I won't go into their life there, as it is very well known. When they came to Paris, I think they lived in an old church. One day when Sarah was visiting an exhibition in an art gallery, she met Henri Matisse. They walked around together and found themselves

Haas: "tres sympathique." That is when their friendship began. She was the one that discovered that he was a very great artist and she did everything to foster him.

Nathan: Now when they met in the gallery, he did not have an established reputation, I gather?

Haas: I think a great deal of this is in here [in the catalogue] that I gave to Dr. Golson.

Well, when the Steins lived in an abandoned church, I think all their Italian furniture and their paintings were there. Theresa Ehrman [later Jelenko] was a friend of theirs who lived with them for a while in her youth and gave their son Allan piano lessons. Many years later, they commissioned Le Corbusier to build a modern house for them at Garches, where their paintings showed to great advantage.

Meantime, in 1913, Matisse had persuaded Sarah, much against her will, to lend some of their paintings to an exhibition in Germany. The war broke out, and of course these were sequestered. After the war, some gentleman from Copenhagen--I think his name can be found--wanted to buy them, and Sarah was presented with a document which she evidently did not understand, and signed, which meant that she sold almost all of them to him. Luckily some of the finest remained in her possession.

When Hitler's shadow spread itself over Europe, Mike said to Sarah, "We must go home." So they wrote to Theresa to find them a house in a university town which had a great deal of wall space. She did find a large empty house in Palo Alto answering the description but it took them a year and a half to sell the Garches home. However, when they were ready to move out here, the house was still empty and waiting, so they bought it.

Meeting Sarah and Michael Stein

Haas: My mother, having known Sarah in her youth, invited her and Michael Stein to come for dinner, and asked my husband and me, as well as others. We thought them a very pleasant, elderly couple, but they certainly must have been years younger then than we are now. Sarah invited my mother and me to come to their house to see the collection, which we did. I was quite overcome by the beauty and quality of these great works of art.

Haas: Mike became ill of cancer and died some years later. They had moved to Palo Alto in '38, I remember.

I don't recollect how many years later he died. I went over alone to pay a condolence call on Sarah, and something between us clicked. We became extremely close friends in spite of the generation gap. This was one of the most rewarding, interesting experiences of my life. She was a very intuitive, perceptive, remarkable woman. Everyone, from Stanford students to Stanford professors to people in Palo Alto, made a path to her door. She particularly liked young men. Mike and Sarah had brought their grandson--who had lived with them ever since his mother had deserted Allan when Danny was two and a half--to San Francisco. He was then in his early teens.

I used to visit her fairly often during the summer, but I always telephoned in advance, in deference to the difference in our ages. We had wonderful long talks. She used to discuss with me to what organization she was going to leave the collection, which she wanted to keep intact. She used to read me Matisse's letters, which she kept rolled up in an old bath towel tied together with a safety pin.

Nathan: When you spoke to her, did she give the impression of sophistication?

The Matisse Portrait of Sarah

Haas: She was a highly sophisticated woman. She was--well, I think all her personality is revealed in the portrait Matisse did of her, though it is not a likeness. The first sketch he made of her in charcoal, is a perfect likeness. Then he transformed this into the woman she really was. I think it is one of the greatest portraits of this century. It equals Picasso's portrait of Gertrude Stein. Mike's portrait is not as fine.

The Gentlemen from Gump's

Haas: Well, of course, these visits were enhanced by the wonderful paintings on the walls and the sculptures she had. She was extremely generous and used to give sketches and drawings of Matisse's away to people she particularly liked. One day, prior to our first trip to Europe after the war, I was at our home in Atherton doing some last minute chores, and I decided to go over to say goodbye to Sarah. I was in rather a hurry, so I didn't

Haas: telephone. When the little maid opened the door, she looked very embarrassed, and she said, "Oh, Mrs. Haas, do you mind going into the library? Mrs. Stein has two gentlemen from Gump's here." So I went into the library.

I might add that I had said to Sarah that if she ever decided to sell anything, to please let me know. She said, "Oh, I would never do that. They are going to some organization as a whole collection." And I said to her, "I think you're perfectly right." Well, when I heard that the two gentlemen from Gump's were there, I began to wonder.

In the meantime (I think it was about that time) Danny had married the daughter of a Canadian rancher and they and their baby were living with Sarah. I remember seeing a jockey taking a warm bottle upstairs to the baby. [Laughing]

Sarah came into the library, looking as embarrassed as the maid had. I said, "Sarah, what are two gentlemen from Gump's doing here?" and she said, "Oh, they're interested in a couple of small paintings that you wouldn't even look at." Well, there was nothing I could do, so off I went to Europe. When I came back and paid her a visit I found that a dealer from Los Angeles, Mr. Stendal, had been up to see her and had bought all her bronzes for \$750. I was so outraged by this--you see, she just needed \$750 for Danny's debts, but they were worth thousands and thousands of dollars more. She certainly was taken in.

I said, "Sarah, if you have anything to sell, please let me know, because I know that I can place them with people who can pay you proper prices. You must not do this kind of thing." So she said she would. I said, "Is there anything you want to sell now?" So she pointed to a small Fauve painting called "Les Genêts" and said, "Well, would you like that?" I said, "No, I would prefer that one," pointing to one on the opposite wall. "Oh, my dear," she said. "You would never pay the price I want for that." I said, "How can I tell unless you let me know how much it is?"

Sketches for "Joie de Vivre"

Haas: She went upstairs to look at her insurance list and came down and told me the price, \$6,000! I said, "Yes, I would like to buy it." It was an oil sketch for the "Joie de Vivre." There are two oil sketches extant. The finished painting is in the Barnes collection, but it lacks the freshness and spontaneity of the sketch. As I was going out the door, she said to me, "Do you think your mother would like the other one?" I said, "I don't know, but I'll tell her about it." My mother came over the next day and liked the painting and bought it. And that was the beginning of a long, fairly slow sale of almost everything she had, because Danny's debts were just too heavy for her to handle.

One day a friend of hers, a young man from Stanford, Dr. Galante, rang up and said, "Sarah is ready to sell a still life and another painting of a girl behind a striped tablecloth." I knew that Mr. Brayton Wilbur, who was then president of the San Francisco Museum, was interested in this period of art, so I told him about it. He sent one of the curators from the museum down, and bought both of them. I'm still annoyed that I didn't buy the girl behind the tablecloth, but I thought I had just bought a painting and would wait a while. How foolish! I should have bought the whole collection.

"Granny Wants to Sell"

Haas: One day, Danny rang me up (this had never happened before) and said to me, "Granny wants to sell the Picasso gouache and an etching." He mentioned a sum so low that I felt it would be robbery to pay that little. So I rang up her nephew and lawyer, Tevis Jacobs, and told him about this. I said, "This sum is ridiculous, it's cheating Sarah. What should I pay?" He named a figure (not very much higher!) and that's how I acquired those two. At another time I bought a drawing of Matisse's which had been the cover of one of his catalogues of an exhibition in Paris.

I had always said to Sarah, "The one I really would like to buy is the 'Femme au Chapeau.'" And she would always answer, "Darling, that is one I will never sell." However, one day she called me up. I remember it was about Christmas time. She always used a circuitous route when she found something difficult to say. She said to me, "Professor So-and-So of Cornell was here last night and he said to me, 'Sarah, aren't you tired of looking at that woman?' and I said, 'Yes, I really am.'" I know there's a man in Stockton who wants to buy

Haas: it, but you spoke for it first, so if you want it, I'm willing to sell it to you." So I said, "Sarah, how much is it?" and she named a price which was more than I had ever paid (\$20,000--imagine) but it was a tiny fraction of what it would cost today. I gulped and answered, "Would you let me hang it on the wall for a week and think about it?" And she said, "Of course."

So the next day it came up to our apartment wrapped in an old blanket and brought by one of Danny's friends. The minute it walked in I knew it would never go out; however, I rang up Tom Howe, who was then director of the Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum and said, "I have the opportunity to buy this painting, and this is the price. I want to know if you can tell me whether it's fair to me, and fair to Sarah." Well, he said that a Matisse exhibition was on in Philadelphia at the time, "and I have a good friend there. I'll call him up and ask him." The reply was that the price was fair to both of us. So I bought it. Naturally it has been a complete joy to me and to everyone who sees it. I might add that this paid for a ranch that Danny wanted to buy, where he was going to raise horses. Nothing was a sacrifice to Sarah if it gave Danny pleasure.

Before very long, Sarah began to fail mentally. It was heart-rending to see this brilliant, sensitive, remarkable woman begin to show signs of senility. Her brother decided to move her to a small apartment, but instead of bringing her to San Francisco where her friends could drop in, he installed her in a flat at Parkmerced, half an hour away from the city.

Nathan: Was she quite old by this time?

Haas: I never know people's ages. Yes. Yes, she was quite old, I think. I used to go out and see her as often as I could. Even there, she still had a very few of Matisse's works. She had a little portrait of Pierre Matisse, which I adored. She wanted to give it to me, but of course I could not accept it. The portrait of herself and the portrait of Mike she had placed in the San Francisco Museum of Art on indefinite loan. She had taken a great dislike to them, especially to his.

We were about to go to Europe again. This was in '53. I had heard rumors that there was someone who wanted to buy Sarah's portrait. This I wanted above all, and of course she couldn't have sold it in the condition she was in.

A Michael and Sarah Stein Memorial Collection

Haas: I rang up Tevis Jacobs, and I said to him, "If and when Sarah's estate is settled, I would like to buy her portrait and present it to the San Francisco Museum of Art as a nucleus of a Michael and Sarah Stein Memorial Collection. I know somebody I think I could persuade to buy Mike's portrait, and do the same." Tevis was very much pleased with this idea.

Walter and I went to Europe. I had a great desire to meet Matisse, although I usually do not like to meet artists, because I never know what to say to them. I didn't want to ask Sarah for a letter, although she was quite able to give me one, because I knew it would probably be a "must" for him. So I waited until I got to Paris and asked a Mademoiselle Pernoux, who had been out here lecturing on Matisse at the San Francisco Museum, whether she would give me a letter. She was very glad to do this and wrote to him.

My husband and I lunched one day at Vence, where we went to see the chapel, then in the process of being built. They were working on the tiled floor, and we couldn't get in, so we could only get a glimpse through the doors.

Meeting M. Matisse

Nathan: Were the stained glass windows in?

Haas: Yes. The stained glass windows were in, and cast a beautiful light, which changed as the sun went round, on this black and white chapel. I bought two lithographs when we left, thinking I would ask Matisse to sign them. We rang up from the telephone booth at Vence, and the famous Russian secretary answered and said Mr. Matisse would be happy to see us the following afternoon. He was then living in a hotel, which had been converted into apartments. When we arrived, we went up in the characteristic little French glass elevator to the second or third floor. As I rang the bell and saw underneath "H. Matisse" in his own handwriting, I got such butterflies that I could scarcely enter the apartment.

We were shown into the anteroom by a little maid. A few minutes later we were ushered into this great big room which has been made familiar by a picture in Life Magazine. There he was, in the middle of the room, in bed, with a specially made painting stand next to him. He looked like a small edition of my father-in-law, whom I adored, so all my nervousness vanished. All around

Haas: the walls of the room were designs for the copes to be used in the church, or which his students were working on under his direction, as he was quite ill at the time.

Nathan: Could he still hold the brush?

Haas: I don't know, but I think so. He couldn't have been kinder and more friendly. Fortunately I speak fluent French. My husband understands it.

Nathan: Did you feel at ease?

Haas: I felt completely at ease. I had been warned by Mademoiselle Pernoux that I must not mention Mrs. Stein, that he got very emotional. So I was at somewhat of a loss to know what to talk about! We start off by my saying something about his visit to San Francisco ten years before. And he said, yes, what a charming city it was and how much he had enjoyed his visit. And he said, "I have a very good friend there. (Pause) Miss Harriet Levy." [Laughter]

But I plucked up my courage and I said, "You have another good friend there, who is a friend of mine, Mme. Michael Stein." And he said, in a very tender way, "How is she?" I said, "Not very well." He said, "Why does she never answer my letters?" And I said, "Oh, you know, Mr. Matisse, she never likes to write letters. But she treasures yours very much." "Why has she been selling my paintings?" I said, "Because while she was left comfortably off by her husband, she did not have enough to cover her grandson's checks, which were very large, because he not only raced horses but raised them. He is a very extravagant boy." I said, "The only good thing I can say about him is that while he was a young man, before his marriage, he was always very sweet to his grandmother, who adored him. He was everything in life to her after her husband died."

I had not brought up my Vence lithographs. I had become a little shy about asking him to sign them. After talking about other things, the chapel and so on, which we had just seen, my husband decided it was time to go, so we took our leave of him, and went down to our car. The little maid came clattering down the stairs and said, "Monsieur Matisse would like you to take a souvenir home to Mme. Stein. Would you mind coming up again?" So then I had courage enough to bring up my lithographs. My husband did not come up.

When I went back into the big room again, I had visions of myself carrying home by air a large bronze for Sarah. Instead, he was writing a most touching inscription in a book he himself had illustrated: "A Madame Sarah Stein, qui m'a si souvent soutenu dans mes faiblesses." I almost wept.

Haas: And then he turned to me and said, "You know, Mrs. Haas, I knew that if I ever met you, I would learn the truth." I was deeply, deeply touched by this. We said goodbye. He died the next year, in 1954.

When I came home, at the earliest opportunity I went out to see Sarah. I brought the book. She wasn't the least interested in that. She wanted to know every word that had transpired between us. She said to me, "Is he angry about my selling his works?" I said, "No, he understands now why you have done it." I did not tell her that, when he asked me the question, "Why has she been selling my paintings?" and I told him the reason, I said to him, "Each time she does it, something in her dies."

I showed her the book he had sent her. I read her the inscription. She listened. Two minutes later, she said to me, "Darling, what is that?" And I would read the inscription over and over, but it just didn't penetrate. She was going downhill quite rapidly. When I visited her sometimes and she didn't know who I was, I just didn't go any more. It was too painful. She died shortly thereafter.

When the estate was to be probated, Tevis Jacobs was so pleased at the idea of this memorial collection, that he didn't let any dealers know. I rang him up, and I said, "What shall we offer?" and he told me, which was the very modest sum of \$10,000.

Nate Cummings and the Portrait of Mike

Haas: I forgot to say that when we were in Europe in '53 we went to Venice one day, and went to Harry's Bar. A large man got up and embraced me in the middle of the floor, which rather startled me. It was Nate Cummings of Chicago, who was the man I had in mind to buy the portrait of Mike. I think he was the man who was after Sarah's portrait. He said to us, "Will you come and sit down and have a cocktail with my son and daughter-in-law?"

So we did and he said to me, "What has Sarah still got?" I answered, "Well, a little portrait in bronze of Pierre Matisse, and the portraits of Mike and Sarah are on indefinite loan to the San Francisco Museum. I have spoken to Tevis Jacobs already and told him that when Sarah dies I would like to buy her portrait and present it to the San Francisco Museum of Art as a nucleus for a Sarah and Michael Stein Memorial Collection. Why don't you buy Mike's and do the same?" He said, "It's a deal," and we shook hands on it.

Nathan: Wonderful! I gather he had known Sarah Stein in the past?

Haas: I don't know if he had known her or only the paintings she owned. But he was a collector. Luckily, he was interested in the Michael Stein portrait which he bought when we bought Sarah's. We also bought the little portrait of Pierre Matisse at the same time, which we have at home.

Nathan: That's a bronze?

Haas: Right here. That little boy [indicating a small bronze on an end table]. We also bought the original charcoal drawing of Sarah Stein, which we gave to the museum with the painting. It is interesting to compare the two. The drawing was very literal; the painting beautiful and poetic, revealing her inner spirit, her sensitivity and intelligence.

The Elmire Incident

Nathan: Am I right in thinking that your association with Sarah Stein made you primarily interested in Matisse's works?

Haas: Yes. Her collection greatly widened my knowledge and appreciation.

I do want to tell you a funny incident. One day Tom Howe rang me up and said, "There's a young man here with several very good Matisse and Picasso drawings for sale, and I thought you might like to see them." I said, "Of course I would." In a short time the man arrived.

He was young and very personable. He had five or six Matisse drawings, which he showed me. This was in 1955. I bought one of a woman lying on a sofa, for \$500, which was an average price in those days. I called my friend Marian Sinton, to tell her about these drawings. She wanted very much to see them and bought one of a woman.

I guess about two years later we went to Europe in the fall, and Gunther Troche, who was head (he has since died) of the Achenbach Collection of Graphics at the Legion of Honor, was putting on a modest show of Matisse drawings and memorabilia. He asked me if he could borrow our Matisse drawings and a book Matisse had illustrated. I said, "Certainly, and will you keep them for me until we return from Europe, which will be some time in November?"

Haas: Well, we came back and I was busy, and then I got the flu. To pass the time, I read the popular book called Fake, by de Hory. I remembered about our borrowed drawings one morning, so I rang Troche up because I thought this was a very good time for me to get them back and re-hang them.

In my rather unprofessional style, I have a card index noting when and where I have bought our works of art and anything else pertinent to them, that I know.

The drawings arrived. I got out my catalogue card to note that they had been in a Matisse Centennial Exhibition at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. In turning over the card, I gave a shriek and then nearly rolled off the chair with laughter. There at the left upper corner of the card were the words, "Bought from M. Elmiere (de Hory. Elmiere was one of de Hory's several names) in 1955 for \$500. Recommended by Thomas Carr Howe"!!! Marian was not amused, I might say.

Many experts had been fooled. Gunther Troche had valued it at \$6,000; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts had bought several, I think; and several dealers had also been taken in and their clients. My fake still hangs on the wall: one, because I like her and love to puzzle out the different way Matisse would have drawn her, and second, to remind myself that fakes are becoming more and more prevalent.

Nathan: I'd like to ask you a little more about one remark you made at our last meeting. You were saying, I think, to Sarah Stein that you would be able to place a picture for her. I wondered how you would think about this. Were there certain people you knew were interested?

Haas: Yes, and when I heard that she was willing to part with something, or had to part with something--some one of her young friends, young men friends of which she had many, usually called me. She didn't call herself except once, to tell me that something was available. I remember particularly Dr. Galante, who is now a very noted surgeon at U.C., was a very good friend of hers. He rang me up one day and said, "I hear your cousin, Mrs. Madeleine Russell is interested in Matisse's 'Promenade des Anglais' at Nice, and Sarah is willing to sell it, if Mrs. Russell still wants it." Of course I rang up Madeleine and she was delighted and bought it.

Nathan: Were you instrumental in interesting Madeleine Russell in collecting?

Haas: No. She has collected many, many beautiful things and she owns her grandfather, Jacob Stern's collection of Barbizon painters, which is on indefinite loan to the Palace of the Legion of Honor.

Janet Flanner

Nathan: I came across Janet Flanner's second book, Paris Journal, in which she discusses art and collections. She has several pages about the Matisse show--

Haas: In Paris?

Nathan: In Paris. And of course she mentions you and your husband as being very enthusiastic collectors of Matisse. She says that when Mme. Matisse posed for this picture ("Femme au Chapeau"), that wonderful Fauve picture, that she was in black, wearing an orange ribbon at her throat.

Haas: Against a white wall. This was told to me by Sarah, and I told it to Janet Flanner.

Nathan: I see! [Laughing] Wonderful! I wondered what the connection was.

Haas: Did I tell you about my meeting with Janet Flanner? It really shouldn't be done, but it was such fun. Helen Russell, who of course was the mainspring of the San Francisco Museum, and a friend of ours, had always wanted me to meet Janet Flanner, but I don't think Flanner wanted to meet me. She was a busy person. But after Alice Toklas died--I knew of course that Janet Flanner was a particular friend of Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas--I thought I'd like to talk to her, because I knew Alice Toklas. I had known her through Robert Haas from 1948, when he invited us to accompany him and his wife to tea at Alice Toklas'. I think I told you that story.

Nathan: Oh, no. That is one we must certainly get to.

Haas: But after Alice Toklas died, I said to Helen--oh, she may have been dead by that time already. I have a wretched memory, you know, really wretched.

Nathan: Oh, you have wonderful little bits that come up.

Haas: Little bits that come up, but, you know, I haven't a methodical memory at all. I have holes in my head, and they're getting bigger. But anyhow, I wrote to Janet Flanner. I said, "I was a friend of Alice Toklas' too. I met her in '48, and Helen Russell always wanted me to meet you, and I'd like to very much. When we come to Paris, will you have tea with us?" And she said, "Oh, you have tea with me."

So when I got to Paris, I rang her up, and she set a date which we couldn't keep, so I said, "Oh, let's not stand on ceremony. You come on such and such a day if it's convenient at 5:00." So she did.

Haas: The minute she walked in, I took a look and I said, "Would you prefer tea or a highball?" And she said, "A highball, please." [Laughing] So at 5:00 she had her highball and I had my tea. And we exchanged stories, many of which about the Michael Steins she didn't know, and of course I didn't know any that she told me about Gertrude and Alice. It was really a most entertaining meeting and neither of us of course ever looked at the time. Finally at a quarter of seven, my husband came in and said, "I think it's time you got dressed. We're going out to dinner." [Laughter]

So I haven't seen her since, on our visits to Paris, but I think maybe if I have time I will try and contact her again, because she's so interesting, and I enjoyed seeing her so much in the film that--was it KQED or KPFA that put this on?

Nathan: I think it was KQED. That's where I saw it.

Haas: It was the film that was made by the National Education--what do they call NET?

Nathan: National Educational Television.

Idea for a Show

Haas: They asked permission of me to reproduce the "Femme au Chapeau," which didn't turn out very well. But the program as a whole was absolutely fascinating and wonderful, and really a great documentary. On it, I saw Janet Flanner looking no different than she had several years before, and Virgil Thompson, whom I knew, but not well. I was talking to him on the phone here when he rang up one day to say goodbye, and while we were talking, the idea flashed into my head about having a show of the Gertrude and Leo Stein Collection, plus the Cone Collection, plus the Sarah and Michael Stein Collection. And I said to him, "Virgil, you know, I don't think it's very healthy for paintings to be shut up in a bank vault. I would like to spring them and start a three-pronged show here," and I told him of this idea that had occurred to me, during the conversation. [Laughter] "How can I go about it?"

He said, "Well, one of Alice Toklas' lawyers lives in Baltimore and his name is --" and I don't remember what it is. I'm sure it's among my files somewhere. As we were going to Washington, I wrote to this gentleman and said we were staying at such-and-such a hotel and I would love to see him. I didn't know his age, of course, but he turned out to be rather elderly, and he very kindly came over to see us in Washington, as I really couldn't squeeze in the time to go to Baltimore.

Haas: He saw no reason why I shouldn't try for the show and he put me in touch with his partner in Paris, Robert Porter. I spoke to Alice Toklas and got her permission. Danny Stein, one of the heirs, was completely agreeable to the idea, in fact quite pleased about it. And then I contacted the mother of the other two heirs, who was Allan Stein's second wife. Her name was Rubina. Alice Toklas always called her "the Armenian." She simply hated her. Rubina said, "No," though both the other heirs had attained their majority, and their mother had no rights.

This controversy went on for three summers. Whenever I went to Paris, I kept trying, and nothing happened.

Nathan: On what grounds did they object?

Haas: I don't think they had any grounds. You see, Rubina had the pictures sequestered, because Alice, according to the will of Gertrude, was entitled to sell anything she wanted to maintain her level of living, which was modest enough. Some time before she had sold three drawings to Mr. Henri Kahnweiler, who was a great friend, but in spite of his friendship gave her a very small price for them.

In the meantime, when I was in New York, I spoke to Monroe Wheeler of the Museum of Modern Art, and said, "If I succeed in this endeavor, would the Modern be interested to be on the circuit?" And he said, "Well, of course!" Finally the fourth time I made the attempt, Mme. Rubina Stein (she kept a perfume shop on one of the avenues, I think) said, "I would like to take you to see my lawyer, and I will call for you." I said, "Oh, it's not necessary. I will meet you there." She said, "Oh, no, I wish to call for you."

In the meantime, a couple of days before had been Mayday, and she had sent me a beautiful bouquet. You know, Mayday is quite a holiday in France. So she called for me in a taxi, and we went down to the very end of the Île de France to one of those beautiful old houses. Her lawyer had his office there. We stooped to get under the doorway and came up to this room where he was seated behind a desk. Fortunately for me, the telephone rang. As I understand French, I realized that he was being extremely disagreeable to whomever was on the other phone, and very unyielding and unfeeling. So that gave me a picture of the kind of man he was, and my heart sank.

As I said, the children of Mme. Rubina Stein had already attained their majority, and as I remember, were in college in the United States. So the people that had the say, were really the son and daughter of Rubina and Allan Stein. So after the conversation, my trying to convince them that of course when Alice died a circulation of the collection in America and possibly Canada would greatly enhance the value of the paintings, they were absolutely adamant in denying me permission to do this.

Nathan: At this point did Alice Toklas still have the legal right to sell the Matisse items?

Haas: Oh, yes. Anything. These were just drawings. No paintings.

Rubina was so frightened that she was going to sell more that she told the French government that Miss Toklas had no bars on the windows, and had gone off and left the paintings for a while, for a long while. That's why she was ejected from her apartment in Paris, because it seems that if the tenant is away for nine months at least, the law insisted that if a tenant leaves a place empty for nine months, that person's rental is cancelled. This is all conjecture on my part and seems to be a dim recollection of something I'd heard. Anyhow, she was ejected. The French government sequestered the paintings. I thought they had been put in the Chase Manhattan Bank, but they were put in a bank in London.

Nathan: Now this wasn't still Rue de Fleurus, was it?

Haas: Yes, it was that famous address. Yes. I think that Janet Flanner and some of her other friends kept Alice going, because although Gertrude Stein had specified (now, I may be sued for libel on this--this is my recollection of what I was told, whether it is true, I do not know, except that I do know that Janet Flanner told me) that the income that had been specified in the will was not being paid to her in full, and that Alice was in need. She not only needed a secretary, she needed a nurse. She had broken her leg. The last time I saw her, she was in this little apartment in bed. And very unhappy.

I'm quite sure that Janet Flanner and a group of old friends did a good deal for her. Now whether the specified sum in Gertrude's will because of the rising cost of living, was not sufficient and didn't fulfill her needs or not, I don't know. I do know that Janet Flanner helped her.

I just gave eleven letters of Alice Toklas--written in her tiny little spidery handwriting, which came every Christmas in answer to my Christmas card--to The Bancroft Library. The last one that I got must have been written by someone else, and she signed it. Her handwriting at the conclusion of her letter was very large, and her signature was very big, which was a complete contrast to her exquisite way of writing--you almost needed a magnifying glass to read it. Which showed me that she was really not in good health at all.

Visit to Alice Toklas

Haas: The visit we paid to her in '48 was extraordinary. We were living at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, because my Aunt Elise was there and not well, and we wanted to be able to visit her easily. Robert and Merle Haas, with whom we were traveling, lived at a different hotel.

One day Bob Haas, who was one of the three editors of Random House--Random House had published many of Gertrude's books--called up and said, "Alice Toklas has invited Merle and me for tea. Would you and Walter like to go?" I said, "Would we? Of course!" This was the beginning.

I said, "We'll get a car at the Ritz." Well, naturally, the car from the Ritz was very elegant, with a very high-toned chauffeur. We called for my cousins and then gave him the famous address--Rue de Fleurus. He turned around with great dignity and said, "Madame has surely made a mistake. This is a very poor quartier." And I said, "For your information, it is a very famous quartier!" [Laughter]

We arrived and drove into the little old shabby courtyard, climbed the stairs, entered the apartment where so many of the great had been received, and were ushered into the sitting room. It was hung with magnificent paintings.

Nathan: Was it well lighted? Could you see them?

Haas: No. [Laughing] You know, it was just daylight, and it was rather late in the afternoon. And there was Alice Toklas, a little tiny figure, with coal-black hair combed straight down all around. One couldn't tell if it was her own or a wig, but anyhow it was very close to her head. And her little claw-like hands. Very tiny figure. Extraordinary. Sitting on a stool--she was by the fireplace--and sitting on a stool beside her was a young man, a friend of hers. We were introduced, and started talking. Tea was served, and to my great astonishment we had biscuits made of white flour. France was still rationed at that time. When you went to a restaurant, and were served these beautiful looking French rolls, they were really filled with sawdust. So I said, "Miss Toklas, how on earth were you able to get white flour?" And she said, "Oh, well, you know, Gertrude and I had many farmer friends, and they haven't forgotten me."

Nathan: Gertrude Stein had died by this time?

Haas: Oh, yes, she had died. I never met her. As soon as Alice Toklas heard that Walter and I were from San Francisco, she turned her back on everybody else and wanted to know all the gossip about all

Haas: the people she had ever known there. We had a very entertaining afternoon. Until Alice died in such unhappy circumstances, I would ring her up and ask if it were convenient for me (or for us, but I don't think my husband went very often) to visit her. This was a great privilege. She was very witty, and she was very intelligent. I enjoyed these visits more than I can say.

The last time was a sad one, because she was really quite ill and forlorn, and out of her well-known frame. You know, to move someone of that age from the place where all her memories remained, is a quite cruel thing. She couldn't walk. She was in bed with this broken leg. I never saw her after that. I think she must have died the next year. That's why I wanted to see Janet Flanner, to revive some memories. And that's where she got this story that I told her, which Sarah herself had told me. That makes it particularly interesting, I think.

Sarah's words were, "You know, this was a portrait of Mme. Matisse. She was dressed entirely in black, against a white wall. The only note of color was an orange ribbon at her throat. And out of this Matisse created a symphony in color." The words are etched in my mind.

Nathan: That is almost verbatim the way Janet Flanner wrote it.

Haas: I have that book but I haven't read it through, so I haven't come across that.

Nathan: It's right at the beginning. I think it's the first article, dated in 1965.

Haas: That's the second volume? A friend of mine sent it to me, and somehow or other I haven't plowed through it. I don't know why I say "plow," [laughing] but I'm reading so many different things.

Nathan: It's a nice thick book, but it goes well!

Haas: She's a great writer. She's a vivid, wonderful writer, and evidently very conversant with French politics and politics of the rest of the world.

Nathan: Now, Janet Flanner, I gather, was an observer. She was not really part of the art world?

Haas: No, she was a writer; for a long time a columnist for the New Yorker magazine.

Nathan: Yes. I wondered how deeply she might have been involved?

- Haas: I don't know. I do know that she must have seen Gertrude and Alice a great deal, and knew all their friends. They had a diversity of friends, not only in the art world.
- Nathan: Perhaps just one more word about Janet Flanner. Can you give me an impression of the way she looked to you when she walked in?
- Haas: Well, as I remember, she was fairly tall. She looked about 70 or so. She had a well-worn face, let's say, but a face that made me feel that she preferred highballs to tea. [Laughing]
- Nathan: She was in sort of a tweedy jacket, as I remember, in the film.
- Haas: Oh, yes. A tweedy jacket. She didn't look masculine, but she was casual in her manner. I don't know how we started to talk about ages. I was at least four years older than she was, and she said, "I don't believe it. Come right over to the window and let me look at your face so I can see it."
- Nathan: That made her feel worse? [Laughter]
- Haas: Oh, I don't think she really cared. But in the Matisse tape that was taken later she looked exactly the same as she did then. Does she write regularly for the New Yorker any more? I've stopped taking the New Yorker.
- Nathan: I see it only occasionally, but I still see her articles--I don't know if she is writing as frequently as she did.
- Haas: I don't think she is. I must at least telephone to her when I go to Paris.

Four Americans in Paris

- Haas: You asked about the tape on Gertrude Stein, which finally I persuaded the radio station, after three months of bugging, to send me. I haven't played it. I have to get someone who knows how to run the machine. I'm afraid of erasing it. I think--I hope--it's not just my part, but the whole day that they gave to Gertrude Stein, which was a wonderful thing to do. I don't remember if they had an old recording of her voice reading poetry, but much of her poetry was read. The whole thing was fascinating, to have devoted a whole day to this collection.

I thought that could be added to the things that I am leaving to The Bancroft Library. As I said, they already have the eleven letters Alice wrote me in answer to my Christmas greetings, and my

Haas: two letters from Matisse when I told him we were buying his painting, "The Portrait of Sarah Stein" and the original charcoal sketch of her to start a "Michael and Sarah Stein Memorial Collection" at the San Francisco Museum of Art. I believe I told you this before, and that Mr. Nathan Cummings of Chicago bought Michael Stein's portrait, so they were presented at the same time, to celebrate the Museum's twentieth anniversary.

I asked everyone who had bought from the collection to do the same, but I think only three have bequeathed their purchases.

Nathan: Now that we're speaking of people you have talked to concerning the Steins and that group, Lucile Golson has an article in the catalogue, Four Americans in Paris (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970). Did she also consult you, or talk with you?

Haas: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, I'll go back to my discussion with Monroe Wheeler, at that time. He said, "You know what your museum should do? They should write a book on these three collectors. It would be a very distinguished thing to do." So I brought the idea back to our then very new director, Gerald Nordland, who had come to us not long before. He said, "I really think it would be a wonderful idea, but I'm not on top of my job yet, so we'll have to put it off a little bit." I offered to back it, to be repaid if it sold. So far, it has come to nothing, but it's one of the things that I tried to do for the museum.

Six months later I found out, not from him, that he had asked Dr. Golson to do some research on this, and had never even told me. This is something I have never understood. Then of course when I gave up all hope--when Gertrude Stein died and the pictures were available, and of course the heirs wanted to sell them, a consortium in New York--I'm not sure who was included--bought the paintings for \$6 million and promised, each one, to give an important one to the Museum of Modern Art. They were in shocking need of repair.

Nathan: You were saying that the pictures had been stored in a London bank? In a vault?

Haas: I was told so. But you know, with poor atmospheric conditions, paintings are bound to suffer. One had a hole in it. It took two years to restore them. So I was really rather relieved that we didn't get them, because we could never have afforded to have them restored. And this last year after their restoration, the Museum of Modern Art took my idea, adopted my idea, and put on this marvelous show, "Four Americans in Paris."

Nathan: This could happen only after these paintings passed from the control of the family?

Haas: As I said before, any persistent efforts to get permission from the heirs failed. So the sale made it possible for the Museum of Modern Art to form "my exhibition," which I knew they would do. One of their curators, Margaret Potter, worked for two years doing research. I don't remember how many paintings they got from Russia; they came over in a warship.

Nathan: Were these all in the Hermitage?

Haas: I don't know, but I imagine so. They were not allowed to come out here. Most of the paintings from other countries were only shown at the Modern. I shall never forgive myself that I didn't go on to see the show. The reason was that I had come back from New York recently and I just didn't want to make the trip. But it was a much bigger show than we had.

So they sent me the forms to fill out to send my Matisses. By that time--well, my "Femme au Chapeau" had been slightly injured in a show in 1966, which went to UCLA, to Boston, and Chicago. And then later, Mr. Monroe Wheeler got 64 of them and showed them at his museum. This is the only place, I understand, where the "Femme au Chapeau" was really well shown but it was not at the Modern as long as the others because of the following story. At 6:00 one Saturday morning, the Boston Museum of Art rang me up, forgetting the difference in time, of course, and said, "Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Haas, but a slight bit of paint is lifting from the cheek of the 'Femme au Chapeau.' We will send it to the Modern, and have it repaired." I said, "Indeed, you will not. You will please send it to the Kecks in Cooperstown." So they sent it there in an automobile with an armed guard, and the Kecks restored this very slight damage, cleaned the painting, restretched it, and she was shown looking 40 years younger.

TAKING CARE OF PAINTINGS

The Kecks and Conservation

Nathan: Could I ask how you knew the Kecks?

Haas: When my mother died in 1956 I inherited two beautiful paintings, one a Derain of a young girl who looks strangely like mother's Magda (Magda Myrold, who became so much a part of her life, and made her last years so beautiful and interesting. Magda just died, and it's a great loss to my daughter and me. She was a wonderful person. The Derain really could have been a portrait of her.)

The other picture was by Claude Monet, 'Mme. Monet in her Garden at Giverny.' This last looked as though it needed a good cleaning and a less ornate frame.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York recommended Mr. & Mrs. Sheldon Keck as the finest conservators in this country. When the painting came back, it revealed a beautiful flower garden in the lower part, which had been obscured by the smoke from the fireplace below. I expressed my delight and admiration to Mrs. Keck, and we have become close friends via letters and many telephone conversations. We have met only three times: She is highly intelligent, frank and tolerates only excellence. Ours is one of my most precious friendships.

Mrs. Keck is a very forthright, frank, uninhibited person, in anything she says about anything or anybody, and of course this really struck a responding chord in me! [Laughter] And she's terribly amusing. They came out to see a daughter in the spring that my husband was ill and at the hospital, for the first time in eighty years. That's where we celebrated, instead of up on the McKenzie River with our children. But I did manage to have her for lunch with her husband, who is a very, very nice man. We found we liked each other as much as we thought we did, so whenever I want any advice on painting or any advice on what to do, I call her up or write to her. When we decided to renovate--we were given space

Haas: in the Veterans' Building and embarked on our drive. I discussed with Gerald Nordland the possibility of including a conservation laboratory for paintings there, because I had learned from Caroline that it was highly important to preserve paintings, and have the work done by only the most qualified people. Otherwise to leave the paintings alone.

He discussed it with the directors in the Bay Area, who were very, very enthusiastic about it, and when we made our donation to the drive, I reserved a certain amount for the building of the conservation laboratory, and a good deal of its equipment. We were lucky enough to be able to engage as the conservator, a young man who had been getting his degree from the Kecks.

Now, they moved--I don't know when--to Cooperstown, New York, and New York state has given them a grant for the school for training of conservators.

Hazards of Lending Paintings

Nathan: I see. Have you had any other pictures damaged?

Haas: Yes. The most serious damage, which occurred through a careless accident at the Matisse Centennial in 1970, was a slash made across the middle of Matisse's "Le Joie de Vivre." We had taken every precaution when we (very reluctantly) sent this little painting and "La Femme au Chapeau" to the exhibition. I insisted they must be packed in a special case and carried by hand to and from Paris by our museum director in the cabin of the plane. The parsimonious French government, to my great disappointment, consented and they arrived at the Petit Palais in perfect condition. Jean Matisse, eldest son of the painter, was the only person allowed to touch the paintings. He was on a ladder, hanging a picture, when he dropped a sharp tool. The "Joie de Vivre" was leaning face outward against the wall below, and the tool ricocheted into it, cutting a gash right across the center.

Jody Haas had gone to Paris with me and the day after our arrival, Mme. Georges Duthuit, Matisse's daughter, and Pierre Schneider, art critic, who had organized the exhibition and to whom I had been of considerable assistance in San Francisco the year before in helping him locate a number of works by Matisse, came to call at tea-time. After some preliminary chit-chat, they said, "Mrs. Haas, we have not been able to sleep for nights. Some slight damage has happened to one of your paintings. Nothing very serious, we assure you." My heart sank. I thought immediately of "La Femme," though I love the other nearly as much. I think I must have gone into

Haas: shock because I didn't have hysterics on the spot and was quite polite. Pierre said, "The painting has been hung, and the damage hardly shows. Would you like me to take you to see it tomorrow morning?"

When we arrived, I could see the ghastly slash right across the middle. I asked to have it taken down to examine it more closely. Jean Matisse was sent for, clumped in and when I commented on how very unfortunate such an accident had been, he answered in a surly and indifferent way, "I suppose so." The tear was even worse than I feared. I then told Pierre it could not possibly be exhibited, and he answered, "Anything you say. We will put it in the vault here until you decide what you wish done. There is an excellent restorer at the Louvre whom the Matisses use." Of course, I had already decided to have the Kecks do the work, but I told him I would let him know.

The next day was the official luncheon to which Jody and I had been invited. By that time, everyone knew of the appalling accident. Bill Lieberman of the Museum of Modern Art of New York was sitting opposite me. He leaned across the table and said, "If there is anything we can do for you, please let me know. Can we meet the painting at the plane, clear it through customs, and deliver it wherever you wish?" I accepted with great relief and gratitude.

Three months after receiving it, the Kecks sent it back to us with not a trace of the tear. Only one expert, with the aid of a magnifying glass and a torch, discovered where the damage--and serious damage--had been done. Is it any wonder that when I established a Conservation Laboratory at the San Francisco Museum of Art three years ago, I dedicated it to Caroline and Sheldon Keck? I have this year (1976) given the museum a Paper Conservation Laboratory.

Nathan: Those should provide excellent facilities for the museum.

Haas: So after the "Joie de Vivre" accident, my husband and I had a long talk. And I said, really lending works of art is too dangerous both in transportation, and even handling at a museum. I think we should make a rule not to lend any more. We had not lent out "Femme au Chapeau" very often. It was always a trial and worry. So when "Four Americans in Paris" was planned for New York, of course, Monroe Wheeler rang me up, and asked for our Matisses, and the Picasso too.

I forgot to mention that when I went into Alice Toklas' apartment all down the right hand side of the fireplace were sketches in crayon on dark paper--it looked like butcher paper--of faces for the "Demoiselles d'Avignon" but I wasn't able to find out until much

Haas: later that the head that I have in gouache (bought from Sarah), which is really very beautiful, was also a study for the "Demoiselles d'Avignon." It took Henri Kahnweiler to tell me, because even in New York they didn't know.

I did not fill out the forms for the "Femme au Chapeau" nor the "Joie de Vivre." Monroe Wheeler rang me up and said, "I don't understand this. They're very important to our show." I said, "I know they are, Monroe, but you know what happened in Paris." He said, "We have very, very expert people to handle these things!" I said, "We have made a rule now that we will not lend any of our work again, and I've given you some of the things that I feel are protected, but I will not lend these two paintings, important as I know that they are. And I'm terribly sorry." Well, I don't think that he's ever forgiven me. He was not at all nice about it over the phone. The next day Bill Lieberman called me up. He had just come home from a trip abroad, and said, "I really understand your feeling, and I don't want you to feel hurt about Monroe's attitude." So, anyhow, they were missing, but it was a remarkable exhibition. They were shown when "Four Americans in Paris" came to the San Francisco Museum.

The exhibition was a tremendous success and drew a tremendous attendance, 96,000 people. The Women's Board here did a wonderful job, under my other daughter-in-law, Evie Haas, in getting out-of-town groups here, and they worked very hard. Daniel Stein, whom I had last seen as a chubby fifteen-year-old, came with his wife. We had a pre-preview for the lenders and for the other museum board, and for the donor group. And then after dinner, they previewed for the membership. I think the show was here six weeks. It was an enormous success, and I was very happy about it, as you can imagine.

Nathan: Oh, that's thrilling.

Haas: I don't think we shall ever see a show like that again, because I don't think people will be willing to lend.

Nathan: When you lend these marvelous things, who takes care of insurance? Not that they're replaceable--

Haas: Well, when I sent those two things to Paris, I insisted they insure them with Lloyd's of London.

Nathan: The recipient handles the insurance?

Haas: Right. But when it's a local show, we never change the insurance. You know, it's too much trouble. But insurance is what is making shows so terribly expensive, because the value of paintings has gone

Haas: up so very high, and museums just can't afford, unless they're very rich, to have expensive shows. We have a special exhibition fund at the San Francisco Museum, which I collected, when we changed directors from Dr. Morley to Mr. Culler, because I thought there would be a drop in our ability to get shows. A group of comparatively few people gave \$50,000 for this. The conditions were that we spend \$10,000 a year for a paid show of popular, so-called, appeal and of great excellence, for which we would charge admission. Half the admission charge, you know, half the profits would come back to us. Thus, the amount stayed almost stable for years and years until a great inroad was made into it. I think when we have finished our present drive for \$2.5 million, we'll have to start putting some more money into that fund because, of course, \$10,000 doesn't get you any kind of a show any more.

But special shows have been very, very successful at the museum. We had a wonderful Giacometti show which was very well attended a few years ago. Things are harder and harder to get. However, we have made up our minds that we must have one outstanding show a year.

Sidelight on Coffelt and O'Keeffe

Nathan: Concerning the problem of the great care with which paintings must be handled--first I want to ask you something more about "Femme au Chapeau" before we go on. The occasion when the picture was reproduced in the magazine section of the Sunday Chronicle--how did this come about?

Haas: Well, that's a story too. I made the acquaintance of Beth Coffelt, who wrote the article. Some years before, she had put on a show at the Medical Center of U.C. in San Francisco, of Gertrude Stein's memorabilia which I went to see. It was a very modest show, of course, but it had Gertrude Stein's letters and some photographs, and so on. Beth was a very attractive, highly intelligent young woman and very knowledgeable, and very much interested in art.

I met her through Alfred Frankenstein, one of the music and art critics here. One day Alfred Frankenstein telephoned to me and said, "Do you realize that Georgia O'Keeffe is the only artist still alive who belongs to the era of Alfred Steiglitz? She should be interviewed and taped. I know a very competent young woman who could visit her in New Mexico and do it." I replied that I thought it an excellent idea and asked how much it would cost. He thought it would be just her transportation and accommodations and that wouldn't amount to very much. I said, "I'd like to take care of that

Haas: part." O'Keeffe was a personal friend of my aunt, Aline Liebman, of Steiglitz and all that avant garde group.

Beth Coffelt became greatly interested in the project but we had no idea of how she could breach O'Keeffe's fortress and dislike of interviews. Beth embarked on her journey, reached the house in the desert, knocked frantically on the door and when Miss O'Keeffe cautiously opened it a crack, said "Oh, I am so sorry to disturb you, but I must go to the bathroom." Which she did, then lingered a bit, remarking on various objects until Miss O'Keeffe dropped her aloofness and they began to chat. She even let Beth take quite a few pictures but absolutely refused to talk into a tape.

As soon as Beth got back to her hotel, she hurriedly wrote down every word she could remember of their conversation. She gave a lecture at the San Francisco Museum, I think, but never gave me a copy of the notes, which she had promised me.

[Note: An article, "A Visit with Georgia O'Keeffe," by Beth Coffelt, appeared in the April 11, 1971 San Francisco Sunday Examiner/Chronicle, California Living Magazine.]

Some time later, our museum had an exhibition of O'Keeffe paintings and I hoped so much that she would give us one, but no.

She did, however, consent to come to me for tea with her friend and manager--as I would call her--Doris Brey. O'Keeffe was more interested in the beautiful views from our windows than in conversation. At that time she was painting "plane-scapes" I would call them--views of sky and clouds seen from a plane. Very beautiful.

My mother had a beautiful small O'Keeffe painting of a petunia which I now have and love.

Nathan: If you have time today, we might talk a little more about Georgia O'Keeffe, and the Beth Coffelt story about her. Did you have the idea for a Georgia O'Keeffe show in San Francisco too?

Haas: No, not at that time, but we did have a beautiful one later. It was quite a project, because she insisted on having one wall entirely repainted as a background for some of her paintings, and had ultraviolet material put above the skylight so that the paintings would not fade. I had read that she had given many of them to the Alfred Steiglitz collection at the Museum of Modern Art. So, not being shy about asking for things for our museum, I didn't speak to her, but I spoke to her friend who was with her and manages all the details and everything--Doris Brey.

Haas: Miss O'Keeffe had a particularly beautiful series of paintings, one of which belonged, I think, to her sister, and I asked if she wouldn't give one to the museum, or maybe all! And I even inquired about buying one, which I liked very much, but that project came to nothing.

She was here, of course, the whole time. She was lionized. She was driven into a corner by autograph hunters. I think she enjoyed her stay here.

For the show, she had supervised the hanging of each picture. It was nerve-wracking for the staff, but they put themselves out and were extremely nice. There were many dedicated people, and they have been there a long time. So that was the story of the Georgia O'Keeffe show. Is that the Coffelt article?

Nathan: Yes, it is. You are certainly welcome to it, if you'd like to have it.

Haas: Thank you.

Reproduction of "Femme au Chapeau"

Haas: As I said, Georgia O'Keeffe also happens to have known my Aunt Aline Liebman. It was because of that friendship, I guess, that my mother bought the little O'Keeffe that I have. So when the show was going to be put on, "Four Americans in Paris," Beth rang me up and asked if she could come to talk to me, and get all my recollections and so on. I said, "Of course." I said, "I never, never permit the newspapers, because of the quality of the paper, to reproduce anything, because they can't do it." Well, she promised that her boss would get a better quality, and that's how it happened.

Nathan: How do you feel about the article, and the reproduction? I think I have the article here.

Haas: I thought it remarkably good, considering the quality of the paper. The first reproduction that was ever made was made by the Sterling Company, under Dr. Morley's direction here. It was for the frontispiece of Alfred Barr's book.

Now, this ("Joie de Vivre") is not very good. What happens is that somebody comes and makes a color photograph, a transparency. In the original work, by the Sterling Company (I don't quite understand the technical part of it) they make plate after plate of different colors and somehow adjust them. It's very difficult and expensive.

- Nathan: So it was really your acquaintance with Beth Coffelt that made the newspaper reproduction possible.
- Haas: Oh, I suppose I would have done it anyway. I think it benefits the museum, because this was a very good way of publicizing the show, which of course was very near to my heart!
- Nathan: The story and the pictures (including "Femme au Chapeau") were published in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner/Chronicle, California Living Magazine (this is for the benefit of the tape), September 6, 1971, and it says, "Reproduction Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Haas."
- Haas: [Looking at "Femme au Chapeau"] It's like a cocktail. When I'm tired, I sit and look at it, and it revives me. It has such vitality to it. When I saw Matisse that time, he asked about it. He still considered it almost his greatest painting.
- Nathan: He still had a very great affection for the picture?
- Haas: Oh, yes, indeed he had.

HENRY MOORE

Nathan: I have just been looking around at the Henry Moore figures and pictures in this room, and thinking of the time you met him.

Some Acquisitions

Haas: Actually, I had these before I met him. I think I got a small edition of the figures in the Battersea Park group in New York at Knoedler's, but I'm not sure. I can always look it up. I meant to bring out my card file. Perhaps I should go and get my file and my diary now.

This one I bought from Hatfield in Los Angeles. "Three Women in a Room," it's called.

Nathan: I see you have both your card file and a diary.

Haas: Yes. Well, my diary is just a date book I started in 1913. I never seem to get through anything. I started putting sculptures and paintings and graphics on different colored cards, but [laughing] I haven't managed to complete it. But I will. I think of too many projects.

There is Henry Moore's "The Family Group," over there.

Nathan: That's the little bronze?

Haas: Yes. In my opinion, it is one of the finest small family groups Moore has ever done. I bought it from Paul Rosenberg in 1957.

Nathan: Is this usual among artists, to do a small-scale sculpture before going on to the large-scale version?

Haas: Yes. A sculptor makes many so-called sketches in a different material such as plaster or clay, and when he is satisfied, has it cast in bronze. If he wishes, he has an edition of any number of casts he wishes made in the small version, each piece numbered and signed and bearing the name of the foundry that cast it. The same is done with a large version, though often the large piece is unique. Very often the sculptor does the final finishing of the bronze himself.

Marino Marini, the Italian sculptor, always does this, so that no two pieces are exactly alike. We love his "Horse," which we bought from Frank Perls in Los Angeles and first saw in Marini's studio in Milan. He and his wife are a delightful couple. It took me three years to find the piece I wanted; when we walked into his home, I recognized instantly that this horse was "it"! It is difficult to place sculpture but I am very happy with the grouping-- a low, narrow table with a beautiful large green-blue Ming bowl to the left, under the "Femme au Chapeau," and the Horse to the right, his neck outstretched to the painting. It is very striking, I think.

Nathan: Yes, it is. Now, what is that group of three small figures?

Haas: That is Moore's study for the "Battersea Park" three large figures. It's an edition of seven; this is number five. You don't want all this--Foundry, etc., etc.

Nathan: I think I would like it. This is the kind of detail that art students would use.

Haas: All right; let me give it to you. It's in bronze, done in '46, edition stamped top of base. "Cire perdue," that is, lost wax method. Valsuani is the name of the foundry that cast it.

The size is 9 1/2" by 6 1/2" including the attached base. I bought it in 1952 from the dealer (a great man), Kurt Valentin.

Now the "Family Group" was 1944, bronze, eight inches high with attached base. And I have edition number nine. It says number nine, but it doesn't say how big the edition was and it doesn't say who the founder was.

Now, this one, "Seated Figure Against a Wall," there was a smaller edition and a larger one, done 1957, original cast. And it's 7 1/2" by 11" with attached base.

"Three Women in a Room," gouache, a wax crayon drawing, 1950. Signed Moore '50. Size 22 1/2" by 19".

Shall I go on?

Nathan: Please do.

Haas: "Women in Shelter in Winter," pen and watercolor drawing, 1941. Signed, dated, titled. 7 1/4" by 6 3/4".

"Three Women in a Landscape," gouache and wax crayon drawing, 1951. Signed, Moore, '51. 22 1/2" by 17 1/4".

Then I have "Two Women with Children" pen and watercolor drawing, 1944. Signed, dated. 6 1/2" x 9", which I bought in 1955.

Then I have "Mother and Child Studies,"--I'd like to show these all to you. Pen and wax crayon and wash drawing, 1939, signed, dated, which I bought in '59.

This one is a dreadful steal. I got it at the Louvre Gallery, where I have my paintings framed. A young man wanted to go to Mexico. I paid him what he asked. It's a leaf from Henry Moore's notebook. On one side it's "Figure Studies for Sculpture," and on the other side "Study of Recumbent Figure." Pen, wax crayon and wash drawing, 1942. Signed and dated. 9" x 7".

I bought this in London--

Nathan: "Seated Figure Against a Wall"?

Haas: I think I may have told you this. The gallery had a larger version of it. I wanted very much to buy it for our garden. My husband said, "I don't want a nude figure of a woman in the garden." I said, "It doesn't look like a woman. You can't tell what it is." [Laughter] Anyhow, by the time I had talked him around, telling him how funny it was to look at it that way, the piece had been sold. However, the gallery had a small edition, so I bought that one.

Nathan: The Moore works are wonderful.

Arranging a Visit with Moore

Haas: I talked to you about my visit to Henry Moore, I am sure.

Nathan: Yes, now let's see. You talked about seeing him at his home in England, but I think we were at the lunch table when you said that. So maybe we can talk a little bit about it here.

Haas: Well, I'm never eager to meet artists, as many collectors are. I do not call myself a collector but others do. We have not much; I just buy things I love. I've never had any advice on what to buy.

Haas: It has all been a personal response of my own. The only help I've had is from one or two friends in the art world whom I know well, when I wanted to be sure that the period of the artist was his best and that the price for the time was right. But otherwise, it's been a purely personal attraction, I guess I would say. I've analyzed the thread that runs through my collecting and I think it's a sense of lyricism, to which I respond. Or an expression of lyricism, I guess would be a better way to put it.

One artist I really wanted to meet was Henry Moore. An artist here, Richard O'Hanlon, had spent some time, I understood, at Moore's home in England, and had taken some films. So I rang him up before we went to Europe in 1958, and said, "Dick, would you give me a letter to Henry Moore? I would love to visit him if it were possible." He said, "Oh, you don't need a letter. Just call him up and say that you admire his work and you have some of it, and you would love to meet him."

Seeing Moore's Studio and Garden

Haas: So I rang him up from Paris. He could not have been more gracious. The following Saturday I went down alone to Much Hadham after lunch, and met his wife and his daughter who was in her early teens, I guess, at that time. He showed me his small studio. Under shelves were stacked hundreds of drawings, which I never got a chance to see. I would have liked to sit down on the floor and just look at those. But then we proceeded to his big studio, and the figure he was making for UNESCO was standing there being finished by some of his workmen under his supervision. He said, "This is going to Italy now to be made in marble, and I hope we are able to retain the look of hope on the face." I thought: "What a humble thing for a great man to say." I saw it later in its finished form, which was twice as large, which means four times cubically of course, and it did retain its wonderful look of hope. However I thought it very badly placed against the many windows of the UNESCO Building, which created quite a diversion from the wonderful great solid figure that he had made. I wish they would put a concrete wall behind it to shut out the building.

He took me around his garden, which he had recently enlarged, and it was a great joy to see some of these wonderful figures in the open air. He had the King and Queen, which are huge and thoroughly regal and commanding.

Nathan: Of what substance are they--is it granite?

Haas: I don't know if they're granite or some other kind of stone. Whoever bought them put them on a high hill on his own estate, where they look very wonderful. But I don't know who that was. And then Moore took me down to a rather narrow piece of property which he had just acquired, to a small copse. He took me into this little sheltered place and there was a figure, rather twisted, of an old woman, and he said, "This is the portrait of my mother." And he very lovingly stroked a lump in the back of her neck and he said, "You know, I was the youngest of ten children of a miner, and I was very close to my mother. She suffered so from rheumatism, and she loved to have me rub this place on her neck."

He was such a simple, natural, wonderfully strong man; he almost seemed a part of nature himself. He really is one of the most remarkable and fine men I've ever met.

Then we had to come in to tea, which was pleasant. I would much rather have been allowed to look at all the drawings! [Laughter] I hope that when we're in England next time I'll have an opportunity to visit him again if he permits. He was kind enough to send us two signed catalogues of his Seventieth Anniversary Show, which I think took place at the Tate or the National Gallery.

Moore in the U.S.

Haas: The strange part of my visit was that though he had never been in America before, he was leaving two days later, on Monday, to get a degree from Harvard and he was then coming out to San Francisco because the Warehousemen's Union had asked him to do a sculpture for their headquarters. I think it's a hexagonal building that they have down near the waterfront. He told me at the time that he was not going to accept the commission, but felt he should come out and speak to them, and the reason he gave for not accepting the commission was that you should really work on the sculpture in the light where it was going to stand, and of course being in England he couldn't do that. And he was not willing to spend a winter away from home again, because he had been in Italy for several months while the UNESCO figure was being done.

He left for England the following Wednesday or Thursday and dined at our home in Atherton before going back, so I saw this wonderful man both in England and in San Francisco within a week. This is one of the most valued experiences of my life.

ERNEST BLOCH

Haas: Another great person who was a friend of many years standing was Ernest Bloch. Did I talk about him?

Nathan: No, we haven't really discussed him at all.

Haas: He came here from Cleveland. I don't remember the year, but the Conservatory of Music would know because he was made their director when Lillian Hodgehead and Ada Clement ran it.

My mother became acquainted with Suzanne Bloch, I think perhaps in New York. Suzanne, who was Ernest Bloch's daughter, had a great ambition to go to Hollywood and become a character actress, because she felt her looks would not get her a glamorous lead part. But she was a very good mimic and full of life and humor, and my mother invited her to come and stay with her here in San Francisco.

I don't remember how long she was here, but this started a friendship with her which has lasted to this day, and we correspond every so often. I see her when I go to New York. She has not had an easy life, though her second husband, who recently retired from Columbia as a professor, has made her very happy. She now has been teaching at the Juilliard for a long time, and has given concerts on the lute and other old instruments throughout the country. She has two sons.

She has shown great courage throughout her life with all the difficulties which have come to her, and has never lost her spirit or courage.

Her father was teaching in Cleveland as I remember, and was asked here by Ms. Hodgehead and Ada Clement--who was a music teacher of mine. Unfortunately I think I was her "shining blight." I did not keep up this endeavor very long, and I very much regret that I do not play an instrument, especially the piano, because I think that to play an instrument gives you a far greater understanding and a deeper insight into the music that you hear.

Haas: Through Suzanne's friendship with my mother and with me, we got to know Ernest Bloch very well. He was a wonderful teacher. He had a class for lay people one winter. It was a great privilege to be in this class and to hear his approach, which was vivid, simple and fundamental.

He used to come to our house occasionally. When he was composing "America," my husband, who is allergic to music, used to time his exits and entrances while Bloch was playing at the piano with the greatest enthusiasm, so that he never knew that my husband was not in the room for the entire performance and discussion! [Laughing]

Manuscripts and Lectures at U.C.

Haas: Bloch wanted to retire after a certain number of years, and came to me with the suggestion of selling quite a number of his manuscripts to the University of California and getting an income of \$10,000 a year for ten years. I spoke to my husband and my mother about this, and with a donation from mother, Walter, myself and from my cousin, Walter S. Heller, we bought the manuscripts and presented them with the stipulation that Bloch give a lecture a year for the music department.

He retired to Agate Beach where he lived with his wife and was left free to compose. When the ten years were up, the University was generous enough to continue on their own these lectures on music. After Bloch died, they were given by some out-of-town, and well-known musical authority. These lectures were at first named for an aunt and uncle of mine, which was highly inappropriate, and later changed to the Ernest Bloch Lectures.

Letters for the Music Department

Haas: I have a quantity of letters from Ernest Bloch which I am giving the music department of the University of California. This is a bequest in my will, but after I've glanced over them I think I shall give them now. There's no reason for me to have them around. I'm trying to get rid of my papers that I feel my children won't want, and which I think might be of interest to a library.

Nathan: Immense interest. I might ask you a little more about Ernest Bloch. Was he considered a rather avant garde composer?

Haas: He was. His daughter is now writing a book about him, and there is an Ernest Bloch Society which is urging orchestras to play his works, which are really very great in my opinion, and in the opinion of a great many people who know more about music than I do.

Last year I realized my desire to have "Shelomo" by Ernest Bloch played at Stern Grove, and Leonard Rose was the cellist.

Bloch was a very, very great man, and difficult, as all geniuses are, but our friendship was a warm one. I remember him with great affection and admiration. He was intuitive, and emotional--a brilliant human being.

Nathan: Did he seem to have other interests in addition to music?

Haas: Not that I knew of. There is a strain of Hebraic influence through all his music.

Nathan: Did he ever discuss other contemporary musicians?

Haas: I don't remember that he ever talked about music. I don't think he was very much interested in anyone but himself. I mean, musically. I don't remember any discussions at all. I'm only sorry that I never went to any of the Bloch lectures. I imagine I thought they were really too technical for me, because he was talking to an academic, or student audience, whereas at the Conservatory he knew he had a lay audience and his lectures were more simple and understandable.

Nathan: What was his relationship to the Conservatory? Did he teach there?

Haas: He taught and he was the director also, as long as he was there.

Nathan: And did he teach composition?

Haas: I imagine so. Do you know Elizabeth Elkus, Albert Elkus' widow?

Nathan: Just by name.

Haas: She could tell you a lot more, because I think her husband taught at U.C. and they were great friends of Ernest Bloch, so those questions can be answered better by her, I think. She's a great friend of mine.

Nathan: Did he play other instruments besides the piano, as far as you recall?

Haas: I don't know. He was born in Switzerland, but I don't really think that a biography here would be of interest, because--

Nathan: Not unless you were interested.

Haas: He has another daughter, Lucienne, and a son, whom I know. But Suzanne is the one who is closer to me than any.

Nathan: Did she ever try to go to Hollywood, or was this just a girlhood dream?

Haas: No, she did go, but she didn't succeed in getting anything. I don't know when she went back to New York and when she met her present husband. Her letters are interesting too, but I don't know whether they would be of any interest to the University, because they are more personal. As I said before, she is writing a book on her father.

Nathan: In his connection with the University then, did Ernest Bloch deal with students in addition to these lectures, or was that his sole contribution?

Haas: I can't tell you. I think this was his sole contribution. And of course the University is very fortunate to have the manuscripts of some of his most famous music. In looking over some of these things, I also found that in honor of Rob Rinder, his "Sacred Service" was performed at the Temple.

Nathan: Reuben Rinder was very close to Ernest Bloch, was he not?

Haas: Yes, I believe so.

Nathan: I do remember hearing about the "Sacred Service" in connection with Emanu-El.

Haas: Yes, I think part of it was played again with another sacred service that--oh, here's a letter from Ernest Bloch. This was written on my mother's death. I'm not sending this. This is the whole book about my mother. Her resignation from the Park and Recreation Commission, pictures of her brothers and sisters, and a tribute she received when she retired from the Commission two years, as I remember, before her death. And then all the clippings and letters: the tribute that Admiral Nimitz delivered at her funeral, and Rob Rinder wrote some songs and spoke the service for the dead.

When my father died in 1928, Oscar Lawler, who was a great friend of ours and the father of my cousin John Stern's first wife, Jane, was asked to deliver the tribute at the funeral, which was held, of course, at home.

This whole scrapbook contains tributes to my mother.

Nathan: Yes, that is most impressive.

Haas: I think probably my daughter will want that.

Nathan: Right. Yes, I think that is really magnificent.

ALBERT BENDER

Nathan: Your references to a few people in the art world with whom you've become acquainted made me think of Albert Bender. Would you like to talk about him?

Haas: Albert Bender was a great friend of my parents for many, many years. He came to this country when he was seventeen years old, and was employed by an insurance firm. He gradually worked his way up until he became the head of it. He was an Irish Jew. I had never heard of any Irish Jew. [Laughter] His brother--I think his name was Phillip--was a rabbi in Dublin. Albert, whom everyone called Micky, was one of the most remarkable human beings that I have ever known. He had a bigger heart and a broader mind than anyone I can think of. He was unique.

He had a cousin here, Anne Bremer, with whom he was very much in love, but they were first cousins and in those days that was absolutely taboo. She was an artist. They lived in two different apartments in the Studio Building on Post Street. I don't remember when they moved there. His home was the rendezvous of all the artists who ever came to San Francisco--artists of the stage, of the visual arts, sculptors, writers. He wrote beautifully himself, although nothing he ever wrote was publicly published. His handwriting was very individual, very beautiful, almost a picture in itself.

He had a marvelous sense of humor, and his laugh was as loud as he was small in stature. He was a short man. He always wore a very wide-brimmed felt hat, which everybody in town recognized. He used to prowl around Chinatown and buy jades and snuff bottles and all kinds of beautiful bowls. He always had two or three small presents in his pocket. If he met a friend, Albert had a gift for her. He was a most generous, warm person, with great communication with people of every sort.

A Camera for Ansel Adams

Haas: For instance, to show his intuitive knowledge of what a person's primary need was, he gave Ansel Adams his first camera. His beneficences were so numerous that one could not possibly know all the wonderful things he did. Every museum here in the city is richer for his gifts. But unfortunately, during his lifetime, when Walter Heil was director of the de Young Museum, he got rid of most of the things, the Oriental things, everything that Albert had given. Of course some of these gifts were not of museum quality. He was prompted to buy them because he wanted to help out a merchant or their beauty appealed to him even if they weren't of the very highest quality.

It was a very cruel thing to do. They should have waited until after Albert's death to do it. But Walter Heil was not a sensitive person. Albert was very deeply hurt. While Grace Morley was the director of the San Francisco Museum, at Christmastime, it was the custom for her to show all the gifts that Albert Bender had made to the San Francisco Museum of Art, which are still greatly treasured, although unfortunately this annual custom has not been kept up.

Tributes Printed by the Grabhorns

Haas: Among the many wonderful and thoughtful things that Albert did was to have tributes, which he himself wrote, printed by the Grabhorn Press. He was a great friend of Ed Grabhorn's, and I guess of Robert Grabhorn. Ed was the one I knew. I have a beautiful tribute which he presented to Walter on Walter's fiftieth birthday. This was only one of the many that he did. He gave me several to distribute to our close friends. It is a beautifully written thing, and a beautifully printed thing. I can't tell you how many of these tributes he had written for his friends.

After my father's death, when my mother began to go to concerts and public things again, he was her constant companion. Wherever he was, his laugh could be recognized all over the place, and people would say, "Oh, Albert is here!"

He was a dear friend of ours too, and practically a member of the family. He used to have what he called "poor man's gout." He called it that because he never drank anything but water or maybe sherry. He never ate red meat. And that's why he called it "poor man's gout," because it's supposed to come from indulgence in certain foods. I think they've made some new discoveries that belie

Haas: that theory, but anyhow, every so often he'd be taken to the hospital. When I went to see him, he used to complain, "This is a terrible place. You're sound asleep at seven o'clock, and they wake you up to take your temperature."

During one of these instances, he was at the old Dante Sanatorium, and I was on my way home one afternoon at five o'clock, and thought to myself, "I really should go in and pay Albert a visit, but I'm awfully tired. I'll do it in the morning." At four o'clock the following morning, the telephone rang and it was his associate, Mark Altman, who rang us up and said, "Albert has just died." You can imagine how stricken I felt that I had not obeyed my impulse to visit him the afternoon before.

Nathan: How old was he?

Haas: I don't know. I'd have to figure it from when he came here when he was seventeen. I really don't know. He was ageless. You never thought of age with him. He was always so youthful in spirit, and in his energies and his interests and everything else, that you never thought of age in connection with Albert.

After breaking the news, Mr. Altman said: "Will you help me with the arrangements?" Walter and I--well, you know, we were glad to be able to help, sad as we were at his death, because my mother would not have been able to do it, and it showed that Mark Altman must have known how close Albert felt to Walter and myself.

Though Albert was not a temple-goer, we could think of no place big enough to hold all the people who would come to his funeral, and we chose Temple Emanu-El. There wasn't a seat vacant, and it holds a great many people--over 3,000, I think. The casket was covered in a beautiful green velvet, with just a simple bouquet which Miss Isabella Worn had made. Everybody in that place felt that he or she was Albert's closest friend.

Nathan: What a gift.

Haas: Yes. I don't think anyone like that will ever exist again. I've never known anyone who had all these qualities of spirit and soul, enjoyment of life and of people, and generosity of heart and mind that he had. All combined in this rather small body.

Nathan: I gather he must have been a very welcome guest.

Haas: Oh, always. Always.

A Book and Some Clippings

Haas: Last year, I realized that Dr. Monroe Deutsch's words spoken at Albert's funeral were the only "monument" he had, except those he had left himself. So I commissioned Oscar Lewis, who knew Albert, to write a small book, and I myself wrote the preface. It was printed by Robert Grabhorn--his last book, as he died shortly afterwards--and distributed; but there are so few now who remember this wonderful man.

I would gladly give The Bancroft this, and when I go down to the country, see what other material we have down there.

Nathan: The Bender items would be wonderful for The Bancroft Library. He was a westerner, certainly, and significant in the artistic life of the area.

Haas: There is one occasion I must tell you about. My mother discovered that Albert was to have a birthday, his seventieth. She decided to give a dinner party in Atherton for him, and we were all to come in costumes of around the 1890s. Among the guests were Col. Charles Erskine Scott Wood and Sara Bard Field, warm friends of mother's. Alicia Mosgrove came as Mammy Pleasant, a notorious madam of early San Francisco. I have photographs of the party.

After dinner, Albert got up and with his wonderful chuckle, said, "I want to thank you, Rosalie, for this splendid party, but I've got to tell you, you've all come in on a freight train. I was seventy last year." [Laughter]

Nathan: Oh, that was even better. Did he like this sort of gala--

Haas: Oh, yes, he loved parties. He loved--he loved everything. He was a man of many facets.

Nathan: I see you have that Sacred Service folder in your hand.

Haas: I'm just trying to--oh, this was in honor of Bloch's seventy-fifth birthday, and these are the people that took part in it. It was sponsored by a group of people that knew him, or were interested in doing it.

Nathan: Oh, this was really exciting, wasn't it? 1956?

Haas: Yes. I think that should probably go with the Bloch letters, don't you?

Nathan: Oh, yes, I do. I see the University of California Chorus Glee Club, the Repertory Chorus, Treble Clef, Temple Emanu-El Choir, members of the San Francisco Symphony, and Edward Laughton, among others. That's quite a committee of sponsors.

WESTERN STATES JEWISH HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

TO REMEMBER--ALBERT M. BENDER: *Notes for a Biography*, by Oscar Lewis (San Francisco: privately published, 1973). An Appreciation by Elise S. Haas, frontispiece. Pp. 38 (7½"x10"); cloth.

This slim, beautifully bound and printed book was written at the behest of Mrs. Walter A. Haas as a loving memorial to Albert M. Bender (1866-1941), who was a very close friend of her family. It was printed by Robert Grabhorn and Andrew Hoyem in a limited edition of 200 copies.

Albert Bender's father, Philip, was a rabbi in Dublin, Ireland, and his brother, Alfred Philip Bender, became the rabbi of the Capetown, South Africa congregation, and had a distinguished career. In the early 1880s, when the subject of this monograph was a teenager, his mother's sister-in-law, Mrs. Joseph Bremer of San Francisco, on her return to the United States from a visit to Carlsbad, brought him to the Bay City. There he worked for and with an uncle for a time, finally establishing his own insurance firm in 1902. Commercially he was very successful, but his fame lies in what he chose to do with his wealth.

Albert M. Bender, through his love of good books and his munificence to writers and printers, and through his love of art and his support of artists and art dealers, plus his compulsion to provide the treasures of literature and art to worthy institutions and individuals, contributed largely to the cultural life of the whole San Francisco Bay Area. Bender was never married in the usual sense, yet one could say that he was wedded to the cultural beauties of all of the arts and yearned to share them with his community. And this he did for many decades.

Bender provided a steady stream of fine art to galleries at Stanford University and the University of California, to Mills College, the DeYoung Museum

and the Legion of Honor, and to the San Francisco Museum of Art. The libraries at Stanford, Mills and the Berkeley University received fine and rare books from him. He served on the governing board of the San Francisco Public Library, and for some years was its president.

In addition to encouraging writers and improving libraries, Bender gave of his substance to Jewish causes. The orphans' home and the Federation of Jewish charities of San Francisco could count on him, and he served on the board of the Hebrew Home for the Aged Disabled.

As a founding member of the Book Club of California (1912), Bender was a major force in the building of the State's "renown as a center of beautifully designed and printed books." It was his work as the treasurer and chairman of the publication committee which was the operating heart of the book club's achievements.

But of all the facets of his remarkable influence on the cultural life of the city at the Golden Gate, none was more impressive than the warmth of a personality that could make all those around him live and enjoy to the fullest. When he died, Temple Emanuel could only hold a part of the thousands who sought admittance to the funeral services. The remainder waited patiently in the courtyard outside. Each of those who was there on March 6, 1941, to honor his memory, believed "himself to be Albert Bender's closest friend." He was one of our people deeply touched with a nobility of the spirit.

—Editor

Haas: I'll put that with the Bloch letters, because I kept those here, hoping I'd have a chance to look them over. I won't give you this now.

Nathan: That's fine. And this is the scrapbook of Bender clippings.

Haas: A little dusty.

Nathan: So he lived till 1941? Did you mount all these clippings and date them? You're actually a librarian by trade! [Laughing]

Haas: I don't know! I got very bored with it.

Nathan: And yet, this is the sort of thing that otherwise disappears, you know.

Haas: I know, and I have a great feeling for continuity and the highlights of any particular time or any friendship, or anything like that. I like to keep these things. They mean a great deal to me. When I look at them, it brings back a great many wonderful memories. And as I say, I've always had a very poor memory, so if I didn't have these reminders, I'd forget half my life, I think. [Laughing]

Nathan: I hope you kept some of the tributes that Albert Bender prepared?

Haas: I'm sure I have my husband's. That I think, of course, my children will want.

You could get some knowledge of that if you rang up Robert Grabhorn,* if he's still alive--I don't know when it was, but I think after his brother Ed died--they may have separated before--I think he gave up the printing of anything. The Public Library bought the whole Robert Grabhorn collection. Mrs. Edwin Grabhorn, who is continuing the press with a partner, might know if they have copies of the tributes that Albert Bender used to have the Grabhorns print, which The Bancroft Library would very much like to preserve, as they are getting other Albert Bender material as gifts.

Nathan: Right. Now, was that Mrs. Edwin Grabhorn who had the Colt Press?

Haas: No. She was married to Dr. Samuel Engel, and he being Jewish they had to flee Hitler and come here. They lived at first in a boarding house on Pacific and Gough, and that is where Alicia Mosgrove met

*Note: This dates back about three years, as it was put together. Hence the discrepancies in time.

Haas: them and introduced them to my mother. Dr. Engel passed his examinations--he was an eye doctor, a very nice man. And she was an artist. A painter. They had a very good life together. She was very devoted to my mother.

Ed Grabhorn had this marvelous collection of Japanese prints. I remember once I suggested that Mrs. Engel give them to the de Young Museum after they got the Brundage collection, you know, but she didn't see fit to do it.

Nathan: Well, this Grabhorn, Bender association apparently was close.

Haas: Very close. Very close. I'm sure that Albert played a great part--if the brothers ever needed anything--in supplying it. It was a very close association. I don't think any of these special things were in the account of what was printed by the Grabhorn Press, which was issued, I think, with the help of Elinor Heller. They have a great many Grabhorn things. I gave all my Grabhorn things to the Public Library, fairly recently, I guess. I don't know exactly why, but why keep them here? You know, none of my children are interested in fine printing, and personally, I wasn't either, except for the association.

The Letters from Mexico

Nathan: We had spoken very briefly about some letters you had written from Mexico.

Haas: Oh, yes. That was a funny incident.

Nathan: Tell me a little about that.

Haas: Well, Walter and I went to Mexico in 1937 with his sister and brother-in law, Ruth and Philip Lilienthal. We went by ship from Los Angeles. I don't remember how many weeks we spent there, but I have always enjoyed writing letters, and my mother always liked to hear from me, anyhow. My father had died in 1928. So I wrote these very descriptive letters of our trip home to my mother. Her brother, Eugene, was there, and she was always very proud of my writing and felt that I should have become an author. But I had nothing to write about, really, and no desire to take up writing, even as a part-time career.

She showed these letters to my uncle, who said, "You know, they're really not bad." He wrote me a letter when I came home and said, "Your mother showed me the letters from Mexico. They're not

Haas: half bad. I'll show them to my editor of the Sunday edition of the Washington Post. If he approves, we'll print some of them," which they proceeded to do. Well, my friends were naturally interested in seeing them, so I kept writing for more and more copies of that particular edition. Finally I got tired of it. There was no copying like Xerox in those days. I said, "Albert, do you know any inexpensive little printer that I could take these letters to, so that when my friends ask for them I don't have to write to the Washington Post?"

He said, "I know just the person." The next thing I knew, I found myself in Ed Grabhorn's printing shop. I nearly went through the floor with embarrassment. And of course now, being a Grabhorn item, they have value for that reason alone! [Laughter] It was a very pretty trick to play.

Nathan: I'm sure he thought they were the right quality for the Grabhorns.

Haas: I really think not!

Nathan: You know, I saw the book. I read it in The Bancroft Library.

Haas: Did you? Well, the first chapter I'm really very embarrassed about. It's very badly written. But the others are not too awful. Just a few years ago, I thought I'd like to write for my children and grandchildren an account of what I knew about our background and my life and Walter's, incidents that had happened, because I found that whenever I became anecdotal, the children would say, "Well, I never knew that. Why did you never tell us before?" And the grandchildren would say, "Tell us more."

Wally Stegner of Stanford, who headed the English department, is a friend of ours, so I said, "Wally, will you look over these letters and tell me whether I could write anything that would be presentable, readable? I want you to be completely candid. The first chapter, I know, is very badly written." His comment was absolutely wonderful. He said, "I think, except for a few glad cries, I think you could do a very acceptable job." [Laughter]

I was very amused over the way he put it, because I knew that part of the way that I write is due to my teaching by Miss Katharine Burke, who was really a great sentimentalist. I'm afraid it rubbed off a little on me. So when I do write, I try very hard to refrain from the little "glad cries."

Nathan: What a beautiful bit of directive!

Haas: However, I've never written that family history, and I guess this is the best way to accomplish what I really have wanted to do and never felt capable of doing.

DIEGO RIVERA

Nathan: Can we go back to some of the episodes in those letters? I did enjoy them and I was not aware of "glad cries," but I was dazzled by some of the names that you referred to. You spoke of dropping in to see Diego and Frida [Kahlo] Rivera. How did you come to know them? Was this an old acquaintance?

Haas: Well, what happened was that Diego and Frida had come to San Francisco some years before. At that time he did some murals for the Stock Exchange, and also for the School of Fine Arts. In that particular fresco was the figure of William Gerstle, who was a painter.

Nathan: Was this at the Stock Exchange or--

Haas: At the School of Fine Arts. It was then called the California School of Fine Arts. I think the picture of Diego on the scaffolding, with his broad back turned, is wonderfully amusing. It is years since I've seen it. We met Frida and Diego at a dinner which I think the Sidney Josephs gave. My mother was there. Lucienne Bloch, who had helped Rivera with the fresco that was done, as I remember for Rockefeller Center--Lucienne, I think, helped him mix his colors, or assisted him in some way years before. She was at the dinner, and was seated next to Diego. Frida, with her black hair, her Mexican dress, and her black eyebrows, which went straight across her forehead, resented Diego's attention to Lucienne, and kept rolling up little bread balls and throwing them at him during dinner. [Laughter]

A Fresco for the Country Place

Haas: I think it was then or later that my mother got the idea of commissioning a fresco for her home in the country if he would be interested. He was. I remember driving down with my mother and Rivera and perhaps Frida, to Atherton. In those days, there were

Haas: vast fields of fruit trees, which were then in blossom. It was when the Japanese had this tremendous industry down there. He also saw a mechanical plow for the first time. When we got down to my mother's home, the gardeners were turning up earth to put in a new lawn. All this he must have retained in his inner eye.

A place was found for the fresco, which he said he would do. It is the smallest fresco he ever painted. It was in her so-called "outside dining room." He started work around the time of Easter vacation of that year. We already had our own home there, so the children and my husband and I moved down to our house to see him work.

He asked my mother on the way down what she wanted him to do. She said, "I would not presume to dictate to an artist. Anything you want, Mr. Rivera." So he made a sketch of three children behind a wall, a bowl of fruit in the center, a little girl to the right, a little girl to the left, and a boy standing behind the fruit bowl. In the background were flowering fruit trees, gardeners digging in the soil, and a mechanical plow.

When my husband saw this sketch, he said, "Well, why doesn't Mr. Rivera use our children as models for the portraits?" "That's a wonderful idea," I replied. And he was most amiable. My mother repeated my husband's suggestion, and he said, "Oh, Mrs. Stern, I would be delighted."

He took the artist Matthew Barnes down with him to prepare the plaster, and he started with geometrical lines, as he began to sketch in his ideas. Not a word was said about having the children pose, so we thought that he was just being amiable and really didn't intend to do the portraits. At 4:00 Sunday afternoon, we all went in to say goodbye to him. We were returning to town and the children were going back to school the next day. At 4:30 he turned to my mother and said blandly, "I would like the little girl to pose for me now." Well, my mother rang me up after we were home, and I said, "Good heavens, we were there a week. Couldn't he have done this sooner, when it was convenient?" I said, "There's no trouble about bringing Rhoda down, but the boys are back in school." My mother said, "I think you'll be sorry if you don't do it," and of course I realized that she was right.

The next day I took Rhoda down. She posed, and in an hour and a half he had the most wonderful likeness of her. I have it here. I've given the other sketches to my daughter Rhoda. So then I resorted

Haas: to bribery, which I had never done before, and I bribed Peter to go down the next day with me.

Nathan: Was he reluctant?

Haas: Oh, of course he was reluctant. But the bribe was sufficient! I don't remember what it was. He is the boy behind the bowl of fruit, and my daughter is the girl to the right as you face the fresco. Her imaginary companion, which she had at the time, called Dega (and I don't know how one would spell it) was the rather dark-skinned child to the left, probably a Mexican child. My son Walter absolutely refused to have anything to do with it. But when he found that both his brother and sister had had their portraits done, he changed his mind. There was no place for him, so he's one of the gardeners. [Laughter]

The Rivera at Stern Hall

Haas: My mother was wise enough to find out that this fresco could be made on a steel frame, so that if the house were ever destroyed it could be moved. Well, we were living in an apartment. There was no space in our country house for it, and none of my children seemed to be interested. After consultation with Bill Wurster, who was then head of the architectural department, and with his approval, I persuaded her to bequeath it to the University of California, to Stern Hall, the dormitory she had given. After her death in 1956, the architectural department moved this mural, which now stands at the foot of the stairs at Stern Hall, and really looks much more beautiful there, because you get a perspective on it as you come down the stairs. Bill put a narrow arch above it, which he tilted in such a way that you could see the entire fresco as you come down the stairs. Have you ever seen it?

Nathan: No. I have never seen it.

Haas: You must go over and see it some day.

Nathan: Yes, I certainly will.

Haas: So that's how we came to know the Riveras. When we were in Mexico in 1938 we called on them. We saw him. I think she was away, meeting Trotsky in some other part of Mexico.

Nathan: Did they both speak English relatively well?

Haas: They must have, because we don't speak Spanish! [Laughter] Maybe he didn't understand really, when we said goodbye, that we were going back to town. I mean, it was such a funny request, half an hour later, that he wanted to draw the little girl now.

Nathan: It's interesting that you were able to hit it off, because on seeing their home in Mexico, there are so many very strongly anti-American expressions in the pictures. Apparently he was able to still keep some social ease.

Haas: I'm glad you mentioned that, because I forgot to say that the fresco he did--I'm almost positive it was for the Rockefeller Center--was so full of Communist sentiment, political bias, that it was destroyed.

Nathan: It was?

Haas: Oh, yes.

Nathan: I see. He is a most fascinating artist. You were saying that the other murals and frescos that he has done have all been much, much larger. About how big was this one that had been in your mother's home?

Haas: I do not know. It was painted in a recessed arch with a sideboard beneath it, but I couldn't tell you the dimensions. It just didn't look small, because it fit the place so perfectly, and it fits the place so perfectly at California (U.C.). But his other frescos, of course, are tremendous, especially the ones in Mexico, which we saw in the Building of Education, as I remember. They are very fine. I have a lovely painting of his of a young girl, in my bedroom in town, which my mother had bought through Albert Bender's intercession. I persuaded my mother to exchange it with me for a Maurice Sterne that I had. [Laughter]

Maurice Sterne was another artist that we knew well, when he and his wife Vera were out here. He is no longer living. He was a very fine draftsman. He was a greater friend of my mother's than of ours. However, when the Lucie Stern Dormitory was presented to Stanford University, they wanted a painting made of her. My husband asked me whom we should commission. I said, "I think paintings usually turn out very badly, but why not ask Maurice Sterne, who is a great draftsman, to do a large drawing, and send him some photographs?" He did a most wonderful likeness of her, which is hung in the main hall or sitting room of Lucie Stern Hall at Stanford.

Nathan: It's interesting that you observed that commissioned portraits, paintings, don't come out well. What happens? What do you think the problem is?

Haas: Portraiture is a very elusive thing. Some artists are not great enough. For instance, the portrait of Sarah Stein is not an accurate likeness. The charcoal drawing which Matisse first made of her was an accurate likeness, but he transformed it into more of a spiritual likeness and the interpretation of her own character and personality, and he also made it a great work of art, which is more important.

Take the portrait of Gertrude Stein by Picasso, which is at the Metropolitan. With Sarah Stein's, in my opinion, they are the two greatest portraits extant today which were done in this era. Gertrude Stein had 80 sittings with him, and then she left for I don't know where. She went traveling and he erased the face completely, and then did it with his inner eye. And that too is not a photographic likeness, but it is a complete expression of Gertrude Stein herself. He was a great artist, as we all know.

MARINO MARINI

Some Portraits

Haas: I think Marino Marini too is a great portraitist. He doesn't do this any more, but I have a book in my art collection showing the portraits he did. One of them, which is in profile, could almost be my husband. I spoke to him on one of our visits to him in Milan, and I asked him who this portrait was. He told me it was a portrait of his father-in-law. I said, "You know, I just wish you could do a portrait of my husband." He said, "I could only do it if he posed for me. I cannot do it from photographs." And of course Walter wouldn't stay long enough anywhere to have his portrait done. He wasn't interested in it. Marini said: "Strangely enough, my father-in-law had many of the characteristics of your husband."

I guess we've known more artists than I realized. [Laughter]

Nathan: Had you known Marini in this country, or did you get acquainted in Milan?

Haas: Well, my first knowledge of Marini was two reproductions in Life Magazine of a portrait he had done of a young poet, and a man on horseback, which was, for many years, his main subject. This was because he, during the war, remembered so vividly peasants fleeing from their fields under attack. And so when I went to New York after seeing this, I found out who carried his work; it was the Kurt Valentin Gallery. Kurt Valentin had a seeing eye, and the artists whose work he carried were really all top-flight.

The Horse Sculpture

Haas: I went there. Unfortunately the show was over. Most of the things had been sold. He showed me one or two. There was one with a horse and rider that I went back three times to see, but the horse's head was down, and this break in line disturbed me. So every spring,

Haas: for the next two years, when we went East, I'd go there but never found anything that quite suited me. The next time we went abroad, we went to Milan, and I rang up and asked if I could come to see his studio. He said yes. And everything he had was on exhibition in Great Britain! [Laughter] But there was one horse there, and immediately I said to myself, "This is it. This is what I've been looking for."

Nathan: This was sculpture?

Haas: Sculpture. I wanted to buy it, but he couldn't sell it to me because he had an agent in America. Fortunately Frank Perls in Los Angeles had another cast of this, so I bought it through him. And since then I have bought a Marini (either watercolor or gouache) of a man on horseback, and a nude figure, which I gave to Stanford later.

We exchanged Christmas cards for quite a while, His wife is a beautiful and attractive woman. Luckily they speak French, so we could communicate.

The last time I wrote to him and asked him if he would reconsider and do a head of my husband, he said no. He was only doing very large projects that were commissioned by governments. I've not seen reproductions of any of his work lately, but we again had a card this year. (1973, I think.)

Nathan: The horse, the Marini horse that you bought, is that the one lifting its head toward the "Femme au Chapeau"?

Haas: Yes.

Nathan: What a marvelous thing it is.

Haas: Yes. That arrangement was quite accidental. [Laughing]

Nathan: When you talked to Marini in Milan, were you in his studio? Could you see what he was working on at the time?

Haas: No, no. I never ask to see work in progress, unless somebody offers. I don't know what he was doing. Maybe he was just taking a breather. [Laughter] So I never knew what his London show consisted of.

Nathan: He is both a sculptor and a painter?

Haas: Well, no, he's not a painter, but all sculptors make drawings. These are two Moores, which I just love. I really think that often I prefer a sculptor's to a painter's drawings, because first of

- Haas: all I love sculpture, and secondly, they have a certain solidity and strength that very often other drawings don't. That's rather a generalization, which is not exactly accurate. I find I'm very often drawn to the graphic work of a sculptor.
- Nathan: Earlier you mentioned that someone, was it Henry Schaefer-Simmern, who said perhaps you should do sculpture, because your drawings showed this sense of volume.
- Haas: This happened during one of my short periods at the Art Association. It was Jean Varda that said it.
- Nathan: Yes. So you do recognize this in others' work, as well.
- Haas: I guess so.

TRANSITION IN ART, AND THE PROMOTION OF ARTISTS

Nathan: When you travel, do you make it a point to see what the new, up-coming artists in that country are doing?

Haas: I used to. But I don't try even in San Francisco--which is a dreadful confession. I find so much of it very difficult to understand, and I'm not always sure that it's art. I think we're in a very strange period of transition. I don't know what's going to develop from it, but they have crossed the line between sculpture and painting, they also--well, I don't know. I think so much of the motivation is false, yet you can't make a generalization either on that subject. But the dealers and the museum directors have taken such a part in promoting work of people who may not be deserving of even being called artists. Very often the motivation is to do something that has never been done before, and that is impossible.

I remember going to a show at the museum where you were supposed to step on two different rectangles of metal and your reaction was that of differentiating between the sounds that your steps made. Now to me that is just ridiculous; it's this kind of thing that I object to. That is why my interest in seeing new work is somewhat desultory. I haven't the energy any more, unfortunately, and so I save it for things that I really care about.

I don't know if I had lived in an earlier age, whether I would have appreciated the "Femme au Chapeau" when it was first done. But I recognized its greatness early enough to know that I could recognize a great work of art. My training since the age of twelve of seeing great works--the familiarity that I have--means that I'm able to recognize almost any of the old masters simply because I've seen them so often. I think my work with Henry Schaefer-Simmern has really given me much more confidence in my own judgment about a work of art. And if I want to repudiate much that is done at this point, and have not the desire to be up-to-date for the sake of being up-to-date, I feel I have every right to be my own judge and buy only what I like.

Haas: It sounds quite prejudiced. But there is so much that I don't understand and think of very little value, really, that I buy very little. There are some artists that I recognize are fine. I saw a beautiful piece at my daughter-in-law's last evening, which I've seen before, but its beauty struck me all over again. Perhaps if I had gone to that man's show, I would have bought something of his, because it really was great--it was very fine.

Nathan: Do you remember the name of the artists?

Haas: Beasley.* He works in lucite. There is great experimentation with new materials, which I think is all to the good. And there are many artists of today whom I respect and like but have no desire to own. First of all, I have enough. I don't put things in closets. I'm happy with what I have.

Nathan: One thing that struck me a moment or two ago about the manner in which dealers and museum directors tend to promote certain artists--one can understand why dealers would do it. Why do museum directors do this?

Haas: I really don't know, except I suppose they like to be discoverers. Dealers for instance will give an artist in whom they believe an annual salary to produce so and so many paintings or pieces of sculpture. Well, in my opinion, this becomes something of a commercial output. How does somebody know how many fine works he will be able to produce with that kind of an incentive?

Nathan: Is such an artist under exclusive contract?

Haas: I think--my knowledge is not very great on this subject, I must say, but I believe galleries are very often the sole outlet for certain artists. They make a contract with the artist to sell only through them. Otherwise they're not promoted by the gallery.

Nathan: Yes, the whole problem of promotion, I gather, is a very great one.

Haas: And San Francisco and Bay Area artists feel that they are, many of them, not sufficiently shown here and find New York galleries which will exhibit their work. It is too bad, but I think that situation is righting itself, because we have many more galleries here than we used to.

*I have since bought a piece of his and love it.

ART MUSEUMS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

Nathan: What is the role of a board, a museum board, in the question of promotion?

Haas: I'll give you a book to read on it, if you like! [Laughing]

Nathan: I'd be very happy to read it.

Role of the Trustee

Haas: I haven't read it myself yet. My daughter-in-law has promised to give it to me. In our particular museum, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the role of the trustee, or the board of trustees, is to raise money and to make policy. We are not tax supported, but are supported almost entirely by membership annual donations. Since our quarters are in a city-owned building, we get free rent, light and heat. When the Veterans Building was constructed (the Opera House was built at the same time to house the opera and symphony performances, and also visiting attractions though it is now no longer large enough for its activities), the San Francisco Museum of Art expected to occupy most of the Veterans Building. However, due to the Veterans' great political influence at that time, we were relegated, offices and exhibition space alike, to the top floor (it did have wonderful light and height) plus an inadequate storage and packing place in the basement.

We cut to fit our cloth until, despite numerous unsuccessful attempts and a search for another site, which came to naught, Mr. Moses Lasky, one of our Trustees and also a member of the War Memorial Board of Trustees, worked the miracle of acquiring the third floor of the Veterans Building for the Museum, plus additional, but not yet sufficient, storage space in the basement. We moved the few remaining veterans to the second floor at our own expense and redesigned one of the elevators for our own use. All these alterations were privately funded, half the sum acquired used for

Haas: the Building Fund, half for our Endowment Fund. As I mentioned earlier, in honor of Carolyn and Sheldon Keck, I established a Painting Conservation Laboratory, all the staff to be recommended by the Kecks. Recently, I promised to add a Paper Conservation Laboratory, greatly needed as more and more people buy graphics, since the price of paintings has reached such astronomical proportions. I do not think that most of our trustees realize what prestige these facilities give to a museum when the conservators are absolutely topflight people, as they are with us!

Nathan: Speaking of trustees, is there any friction between them and the directors and staff?

Haas: Not when a museum has a well qualified and outstanding director whom everyone respects, such as Mr. Hopkins. I do think, however, that the staff of any museum is jealous of its prerogatives. In the end, however, it is the trustees who have the final say.

Nathan: When you speak of setting policy, that's really broad policy, isn't it?

Haas: Yes. For instance, we were to have a show of San Francisco artists and one of them, whose name I have happily forgotten, wanted a large placard placed right next to this painting reading, "I protest our troops in Vietnam." This was brought to our attention. We decided we were not a political body and if he would not show his painting without this placard, we would dispense with showing his painting.

But I don't think this leadership is true of all museums, I really don't. Many boards of directors, as I say, just sit passively. We also, sometimes suggest shows that one of us knows about. There should be a little more cooperation, because it's often possible that a trustee will know of a collection which might be available to show. You know, that kind of thing. It's very boring for the trustees, if they really are not active on some committee.

If you have too large a board, that's difficult. During the time when I was most active, we had a small nucleus. First of all, we had a very poor director, and when you have a poor director, as I found when I was at Mount Zion, the trustees become very much more involved, and work very much harder, than when you have a good director.

Nathan: I gather you are still very much interested in the museum and its collections. Could you say a little more about your long association with the museum? Weren't you originally on the Women's Board?

Haas: Yes. I almost resigned after three years on the Women's Board of the San Francisco Museum of Art, thinking I was not contributing much, although I was secretary of the board and had organized a house tour. Quite to my surprise, as I was on the verge of announcing this decision, I was asked to become president of the board. I worked hard and enjoyed it, as the members were all interested and very much involved. In 1955 I was made a Museum Trustee and in 1964, elected president--the first woman to be so chosen in the United States.

I think it was a time of great difficulty. Dr. Grace McCann Morley, the exceptionally fine but very difficult director, had been asked by an earlier president to take early retirement. Her successor, in my estimation, was not competent in any way for the position, but no one listened to me. Then, after I had been president for three weeks, I was asked to let him go and find someone more competent.

We had no money for an acceptable salary, so the first thing was to raise an endowment fund. Within a month, I had raised \$450,000 from four trustees, including ourselves. It took much longer to find a director, but as his predecessor had fortunately planned exhibitions for two years in advance, I did not have that problem. Clifford Peterson, the controller, became assistant director and my right hand in every way. So, with his aid and that of six devoted trustees, things went very well for the two years plus of my term. I am still on the board.

I might say at this point, because of some of the foregoing pages, that San Francisco is one of the two cities where there is less prejudice against the Jews than in any others in the United States. I believe it is because those Jews who first came here were largely from France, Germany and Great Britain, and had enjoyed privileges of citizenship and education denied our co-religionists in other countries. They joined in building up the city and had many Christian as well as Jewish friends. My parents had many of both, as have we.

Disposition of "Femme au Chapeau"

Haas: I'm very troubled now about the disposition to make of the "Femme au Chapeau." Naturally, it's left in my will, as is everything else I bought from Sarah Stein, to the Memorial Collection at the museum, established for the Steins at my instigation. But with the changing times, and the changing things that some museums feel called upon to do, which involve them in concern with social conditions

Haas: and this kind of thing, I wonder whether a great painting like this will always be appreciated, and whether perhaps it doesn't belong in the National Gallery. I would feel very sorry if I became convinced that I should not give it to the San Francisco Museum, because after all, it should always have a background of fine work from which whatever is going on at present has emerged. And I probably will stick to my original plan. But it really is a question in my mind.

You know, the younger people talk now--and the artists too--about the museums being mausoleums. Well, I don't think they are. They have a life of their own, and are very valuable as a history of art of the past, and the very finest art of the past, which artists nowadays ignore, almost completely. They want to do their own thing. And I don't think they know very much, many of them, about the art of the past. Now that may be a mistaken conception on my part. I don't know.

Nathan: There does seem to be a great deal more interest in art history, I gather, than there has been.

Haas: Is there? Well, maybe I'm wrong, but I don't know interest by whom in art history.

Nathan: University students. Perhaps this is too personal and limited an observation.

The Museum's Rental Gallery

Haas: Well, we brought school children into the museum. The Rental Gallery was established quite a number of years ago there, and at that time, we got works of art directly from the artists, so that they themselves benefitted from the fees. And this was a great thing. But when the director, Mr. Nordland, came, he changed that and did what they do at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and borrowed works from dealers, who of course took a percentage. So the artists himself, unless the work was sold, did not benefit. It just was a much easier process.

He also objected to having a committee of the Women's Board choose the works of art, and we had two or three extremely knowledgeable women on that board. He wanted the staff to do it. I don't think that the Rental Gallery has had the interest of the membership since then. I mean, the membership interest hasn't been as great because maybe some rather "far out" things were chosen, which they weren't prepared for. It was really founded to train people. To allow young people to hang paintings, or have sculpture,

Haas: in their homes for three months or another three months--a renewal of three months--with the possibility of buying. And in that way, really, train them to love art.

It was a very, very great membership attraction. Now many galleries have gone into the rental business, so we're not unique as we used to be, and the method has changed, so at present they're making a review of the whole thing. I don't know what the outcome will be.

They also for a while carried prints, but those they only sold, they didn't lend. Of course, there's much more danger to those, I suppose. I just think that if a rental gallery is efficiently run, and the works are well chosen, the interest will revive, especially in prints, which people are buying more and more because they can't afford the prices that many paintings bring. And then some of the artists that used to rent to us have become so well known that the fee that we have to ask is too low for them to let us have any of their work. There are a great many interesting problems, but one of the very good things that the Rental Gallery accomplished, when the Women's Board ran it, was rental to elementary schools.

The Children's Choice

Haas: This was the project of Mrs. E.M. Cox. Groups of children used to be brought by their teacher and allowed, without any guidance whatsoever--this was emphasized that there should be no guidance--to roam around the rental gallery, and by vote pick out a painting or a piece of sculpture that they would like to have in their school for three months. The Parent-Teachers' Association of that particular school would become members so that the school was eligible, and would pay, which was a nominal fee of perhaps \$5 or \$10 for three months, to have this in the school.

In order to have some of the poorer schools take advantage of this, Mrs. Cox got a grant from Mrs. Rockefeller III of \$1 thousand a year for three years, which was certainly modest enough, and it was renewed then for another three years.

This still goes on, except that I'm not sure now whether they don't get a lecture beforehand, which to me is--I'd rather see a child's instinct prevail than to be told what he should think about something. So that was one of our activities.

Nathan: That is admirable.

The Question of Communication

Haas: I did tell you, I think, that I'm just reading a booklet that the Association of Art Museum Directors had just gotten up, defining the role of the board of trustees, or the board of directors, and the director. So that you see, they have trouble everywhere.

Nathan: Yes. I assume that it is the board of directors that really keeps the community link?

Haas: It has to. It raises the money, and its responsibility is the policy of the museum, which of course is discussed. But I wish there were closer communication between the director and his board.

Nathan: Is there any way this could be developed?

Haas: Well, I don't know that--I really don't know. I've been on the board of the San Francisco Museum for twenty years, I think, and I still don't know--and if I don't know, I don't know who knows, except possibly the president of the Women's Board, who is in closer contact with the staff I think than we are--who knows exactly the duties of each member of the staff. We can have it outlined on a piece of paper, but that doesn't happen more than every five or six years, if it's asked for. But I was absolutely appalled when the controller took early retirement (he'd been there twenty years), at the number of things he was responsible for. Not only keeping the books, but he was in charge of the staff, and he had other things to do. I mean, it was a job for three men, not just one.

Searching for a Director

Haas: I think that on the whole, the board should be more informed on these things. Of course, it's the director's responsibility. When we looked for a director after Dr. Morley left, we knew nothing about looking, and we really didn't look into it properly. The man we took was about to accept the post of director of education, or head of education at the Chicago Art Institute which didn't mean he knew a thing about running a museum, and none of us had sense to realize this. His personality was very pleasant, and he talked well, but he was an impossible director.

Haas: And again, as in the case of the certified public accountant of Mt. Zion, the board was very involved with the running of the museum. In fact, we found out that he had passed up several programs that we would have very much liked to have, without our knowledge. I don't know how you prevent this, but we then formed a committee called the Policy and Program Committee, on which those directors were put who took the most interest in the museum. One of the things that the director was supposed to report to us, was what shows were available, which is never done any more. This was never done before, because Dr. Morley was very conversant with all that was going on in the art world, but this man was not.

This has to do with Mr. Culler. As I told you, they asked me to be president.

Nathan: [Laughing] They do pick you, don't they!

Haas: And as I mentioned, Mrs. Russell and two other influential trustees came and said, "Now you've got to get rid of Culler," after I had been inveighing against him for seven years. So I said, "What are you going to give me for money?" So Mr. Fleishhacker said, "Well, I'll make a survey of endowment funds. I think we should have an endowment fund." He discovered that only one other museum of our character, you know, voluntary museum, did not have an endowment fund. So that was the first order of business as far as I was concerned.

The year before I had visited the Guggenheim Museum and saw Mr. Thomas Messer, and discussed the question of directors with him. This was before I was president, and this was a very confidential meeting, because I didn't know too much about how, when the time came, one went about it. He told me very severely that of course we must not start looking before we had told our director. So we didn't.

But then when we decided, after we had gotten sufficient money--the \$450,000 I mentioned--the director was asked to come here one day, and three or four of the trustees were with me. He had evidently heard. We were sure he had heard rumblings, because, you know, my father-in-law used to say, "If one person knows a secret, eleven people know a secret."

So we told him that we felt we should look for a new director. He leaned back, looking like the cat who swallowed the canary, and said, "Well, I've already taken another position."

Nathan: So he did it without telling you!

Haas: He did it without telling us. Anyhow we did not have a guilty conscience. So he left, and I asked Mr. Clifford Peterson, who was our controller, to be the acting director. Fortunately George Culler had arranged shows for two years ahead, because of course Mr. Peterson was not qualified to do that, but he was well qualified to do everything else. He continued to be controller as well as acting director. He told me that this was really the happiest time of his life, because he really had a chance to show what he was capable of doing. He's college educated, and really a wonderful, devoted man. I feel very bad that he took early retirement about a year ago and has gone abroad.

We started to look, and I think I told you--I wrote to everyone I knew in the art world, whether professional or not, for names of possible directors, whether they were available or not. I just wanted to make a collection before we started to look. I appointed a very excellent committee, of the most interested and most intelligent trustees. I had eighty names to present, with their qualifications. Of course most of them were not available, but we had--I think we interviewed either eleven or fifteen.

We made up our minds, or each individual made up his mind. I know Mr. Hubert and I interviewed someone in New York, and Mr. Cox interviewed somebody someplace else. If we felt that they were really unsuitable for some reason or other, we would just send that report back to the committee. But if we felt they were worth interviewing, we would have them come out to be interviewed.

Well, during that year I went to Washington, and I had written to Mr. Gerald Nordland, who was president of the Museum--the Gallery of Modern Art in Washington, a very small museum, with four on the staff.

I went to the museum to keep my appointment, and evidently his secretary had made some kind of a mistake, and he was showing a group around the museum. He came out to speak to me and said he was terribly sorry, and he could see me perhaps in three-quarters of an hour. Well, I couldn't wait, because my husband had planned to go to New York that afternoon, so I rang up Mr. William Roth, who was a trustee of the museum and had resigned from every other committee he was on when he left San Francisco for Washington and his government duties. However, when his resignation had been presented to our board, I begged them not to accept it, because I wanted him to take the presidency of the museum when he came back. Although that, I knew, was several years off.

Anyhow, he was a very valuable trustee. I telephoned to him and told him the circumstances, and I said, "Bill, will you take over for me, and will you make an appointment with Mr. Nordland,

Haas: and I'll be in New York. Ring me up and give me your impressions." He didn't ring me up right away. He made an appointment, and then he made another appointment, a second appointment, and asked him to lunch, and was so well impressed that he called me. Although Mr. Nordland had a contract with his board of trustees which had two and a half years more to run, he said, to me, "I think he is so right for us and for San Francisco, that he is worth waiting for."

I said, "Only if he will agree to plan our art exhibitions for the year and a half following the ones that had already been arranged for." For a stipend, of course. He was going to be paid for it. Mr. Roth said, "If I were you, I would have him come out and interview the search committee," or whatever we called ourselves. So he came out and the meeting was here. This was the first person that everyone, every member of that committee approved of. And then he visited various committee members privately and we decided to accept him under the conditions outlined.

He said, well, he would go back to Washington and give us an answer in ten days. He accepted, and at the same time he told his trustees they had better look for somebody else. So that made me feel that contracts were not always binding.

He seemed, when he came, to have a rapport with the art community. He went to all the openings. He writes extremely well, and we have been able to publish several catalogues on shows that we've had which he has written extremely well. We had been compiling, under George Culler, a catalogue of our permanent collection, but when he saw it he felt that it was not sufficiently scholarly. So he discarded it, and this year we have brought out the catalogue, which is not up to date, not quite up to date, but which is an excellent one and really very necessary.

Function of a Catalogue

Nathan: Could I interrupt just a moment? What is really the basic purpose of a catalogue? Is it a historic record?

Haas: Yes. It's a historic record, and it is very useful for other museums. We send them to all the museums here, in this country (and maybe even to Canada and abroad. I really don't know) for their libraries. Of course we will, in a specified time, bring out a companion catalogue to bring it up to date. Many museums have catalogues. I suppose most of them do, if they're big enough and can afford it. We did get some help on this, some outside help. Of course, right now we're right in the middle of changing from a small museum to a bigger one, and I hope we make a success of it.

Nathan: Do you have these catalogues published by commercial publishers?

Haas: Yes. I think this was published in Germany, because we got the cheapest, least expensive bid for them, and the color reproductions are very good. They're much better abroad than they are here.

I'm still deeply interested in the museum. As my husband teases me, he says, "You still sometimes think you're president and you interfere in things you have no right to interfere with." I said, "I can't help it. If something seems wrong to me, I've just got to talk about it." [Laughing] And I hope I'm not too much of a nuisance.

Nathan: That sounds like a very husbandly remark. I was interested too in some history of the museum, or at least stories associated with the museum that you may or may not want to comment on. There was a story about Robert Oppenheimer's pictures. Do you recall this, in 1936, that he had offered, or he did give to the museum a long-term loan of pictures he had inherited from his parents? Does that sound familiar at all?

Haas: You see, I wasn't associated with it then--that was before my time. I did forget to mention when I spoke of Helen Russell and her brother William Crocker that they really were the most generous supporters of the museum and they pledged a guarantee of \$10,000 apiece if needed, and of course it was always needed. Helen gave real leadership to the museum until the time of her death. It was a strange thing, after I went on the board of trustees, she and I used to discuss things. I admired and had a great deal of affection for her. She was a remarkable woman, I think the greatest woman in San Francisco of her time. Highly intelligent, and right-thinking. Charitably disposed. Is that the right word? She gave generously to charity, as did Bill Crocker until he married his third wife, who evidently didn't see things the way he did. He left not one cent, either to the museum or to charity, nor did he leave the paintings that we had expected, and had housed, and had shown for years and years. They were all sold by his children at Parke-Bernet, and scattered.

Nathan: Strange.

Haas: Yes. I don't know anything about the Oppenheimer pictures at all. I'd be interested. I wonder who would know?

Nathan: Well, I'm not even sure where I found this, but the statement was that these pictures included a Vuilliard pastel portrait, a Renoir still life, a picture from Picasso's blue period, and a Despiou portrait head in bronze.

Haas: We have a Despiou portrait head in bronze, but that was not it.

Nathan: It might have been from Grace Morley's memoir. I may have picked it up from that.

Haas: Has she written a memoir?

Nathan: No, she has an oral history memoir.

Haas: She has. Oh, how interesting.

Nathan: Yes. I must get you over to The Bancroft to see some of these.

Haas: I would love it. I would love to read that. The whole Morley episode in the museum was a very trying and a rather tragic one. It may have been (and this is just a guess, because I never heard of it) that Robert Oppenheimer at that--could he have been--no, that wasn't the McCarthy era.

Nathan: This was the Oppenheimer that did suffer later--

Haas: Later. So I see no reason not to have accepted those.

Nathan: Oh, I believe that they were accepted.

Haas: I've never heard about them.

Nathan: A long-term loan is the reference, and 1936 was the year, so he was very young.

Haas: I'd love to have that memo.

Nathan: I can certainly make you a note so you can check on it.

Haas: Will you? I'd like to check on it. It's most interesting. The Despiau head that they have now was bought in memory of my mother after her death, through contributions from the Women's Board. I was allowed to have the selection of the work of art. So I thought that this was something that she would have admired and liked very much. I bought it in New York. Dr. Morley thoroughly approved of it.

Nathan: Can you tell me a little bit about it?

Haas: Well, it's the "Portrait of Mlle. N." I'd have to look it up.

Nathan: Does the Museum of Art have any sort of connection with the public museums? Is there a liaison of any sort?

Problems of Running a Museum

Haas: No. We wish there were more cooperation. We tried it, and we had a tri-museum show a few years ago. We've always been sorry when the de Young, for instance, has had a show of contemporary art, or even of a California artist, which we felt we should have had. I don't know whether it was due to the director's lack of interest, or lack of knowledge that this show was available. Because I feel that we should stick, all of us, to our own periods when we have exhibitions, but of course it doesn't really always happen.

The de Young approached us on one or two occasions to join them, and move out there, but we are open almost every evening until 10:00, and we find that 25 percent of our attendance is after 6:00. We didn't want to give up our own identity. We didn't want to be under civil service. And we knew that people wouldn't go out to the park, especially these days. So we abandoned that.

It's a struggle to collect memberships each year, to have enough to run the museum. Fortunately our portion of the Publicity and Advertising Tax (I think it's called--I call it the hotel tax) rose from \$15,000 to \$45,000, and is now \$95,000. We would like more, but this year has not been a good year for hotels, I'm afraid. However, we always have hope. And of course we have done a perfectly remarkable job of collecting \$2,100,000 so far in a comparatively short time, in pledges and in cash, during what I would call--well, which is an inflationary period, which is in a way a depression. So this has been a wonderful thing. This is the "Fund for the Seventies," half of which goes to the endowment fund, and half of it goes to the building fund.

Nathan: I see. So you do contemplate more remodeling within the building?

Haas: Well, they're finishing the top floor now, and we'll have a grand opening in October, I hope.

Nathan: Oh, that will be marvelous. Speaking of the museums having sheltered and cared for and displayed works of art with the assumption that they would be retained, is there a formula for owning a life interest in a work of art and then directing that it go to a museum? What is the usual system for this?

Art Owned in the Bay Area

Haas: We made a survey, Mrs. Cox and I, some years ago, of art owned in the Bay Area. And then these professionals picked out paintings or sculpture that they would like very much to have, and Mr. Lasky, who has given us invaluable legal services, for years, as a trustee, worked out a formula for our letter to various people. There is a special name for it, which I forget, which he did not use, but I saw it used in the Museum of Modern Art report, I think. You see, the laws have been changed now. You used to be able to give a work of art to a museum, and whenever you felt like hanging it in your own home, you were permitted to, or you were permitted just to keep it. This was not a life interest, it was an outright gift, on which you got a tax deduction.

Well, Congress tightened that up very much. If something was given to a museum, it had to be in the museum. The former owner could not have it. However, in soliciting bequests or gifts from people, we found from Mr. Lasky that a person, a collector, could give perhaps one fourth interest to the museum in that work of art, and retain it in his home, and get a tax reduction on one quarter of its then value. But when the whole gift was given, the remainder would be calculated at the then existing tax rate, so that it was an advantage. Because most art, when it's good, advances. The advances in this past year have been almost ridiculous, they are so tremendous.

One or two people did take advantage of this. We have a partial interest in the Giacometti that's owned by a friend of mine. Unfortunately, many people did not participate. I think we should bring this to their attention again, because with the advance in the prices that people pay for really inferior works of art, at Sotheby's, or Parke-Bernet's or Christie's, it is more a liability to your estate to own a great deal of art.

Nathan: All this takes a great deal of planning and cultivation, I gather. It's certainly a fascinating field. There was a note about some gifts, including a Rockefeller gift, in memory of Helen Russell.

Haas: Yes. This is to the "Fund for the Seventies." I wrote to Mr. Rockefeller, because nobody else had picked it up, though I really don't know him. He had given a very generous amount to our first endowment fund drive, through a letter that Helen Russell wrote, and in her honor he sent \$53,000.

Nathan: Was this Nelson Rockefeller?

Haas: No, this is David Rockefeller. It was in her honor, and it was to go to accessions. Well, it went into the endowment fund, of course, which is what she had asked for, and so we just have the interest

Haas: from that, but it was a very handsome gift. She learned about it just shortly before she died, and was very pleased.

So in my letter I recalled his friendship and what he had done before, and wondered whether he would like to participate in this, and he sent \$10,000 in her honor, because the main gallery is being named after her. And the west gallery is being named after me.

Nathan: Oh, that's very exciting, isn't it?

Haas: Well, I think it's very nice. I hadn't expected it. The library is being named for Louise Ackerman, who for countless years served as a volunteer, every day, in the library, and gave to it in memory of her son, Lloyd, Jr., who was killed in the war. And another donor, Mrs. Paul Wattis has given a substantial sum, which will name a smaller gallery. The Walker family, I think--a gallery is being named for them. And the auditorium, through a gift of Mrs. Charles Kendrick is being named for her husband who is one of the founders of the museum, and remained on the board until his death.

Nathan: Well, you'll really have a very fine facility.

Haas: Yes. We will have a wonderful facility.

Changing Views of Art and Museums

Haas: I think I heard--now, I'm not sure--that when Mr. Hightower, who was a highly controversial figure--

Nathan: Was he?

Haas: Oh, yes, because he had written an article that was published in a magazine, and I have the article. I've read it. He thought that the museum of the present and the future should be completely different from the museums of the past, which were mausoleums, and that there should be no more museums.

Nathan: Oh, is this John Hightower?

Haas: Yes. He wrote that art should be taken to the people, and should be put in subways, and should be put in parks. I mean, he had no, absolutely no consideration for what would happen. Maybe he was just thinking of modern art, some of which is self-destructive anyhow! [Laughter] I remember not too many years ago the [New York] Museum of Modern Art had a big ceremonial meeting where an artist

Haas: constructed something and then burned it! I certainly think it sounds like that movie, you know--which is the movie I used to like? You got instructions, and then it was self-destructive.

Nathan: Yes, it was a spy picture.

Haas: Yes, it was. And now they have such strange theories that it was a complete surprise when the very distinguished board of directors of the (N.Y.) Museum of Modern Art--which in its day had been a pioneer under Alfred Barr, who had built it up into great eminence, and had gotten some remarkable acquisitions--should engage as the director Mr. Hightower, who had such extreme ideas. I found out later that he was the administrator, and said that he really knew nothing about art whatsoever, and that it wasn't necessary to know about art to run a museum, and that was all left to the head curator. They had a great deal of trouble, and they dismissed 52 people to reduce expenses. (I don't think this has anything to do with anything, you know.)

Nathan: Well, you see, you're very experienced in functioning as a citizen in the art world, and your observations certainly have value.

Haas: I know, but this is just a transitory thing. Then there was a strike of the employees there, and they unionized and the museum got terribly involved with the local artists who wanted to have a say in how the museum was being run, and they really got themselves in an awful lot of trouble.

They took back all the dismissed employees, and then gradually let them go. One of them was an assistant curator to the head of the painting and sculpture department, who'd been there twenty years. I thought he'd been dismissed, but I believe he's on a sabbatical, and I think he's back there again. He's a very good friend of mine, and an extremely able man, and got more accessions than anybody except Alfred Barr, for the museum in his years there.

They dismissed Margaret Potter who had done two years' research on the "Four Americans in Paris" which was the greatest, most successful show they've ever had, with the highest attendance. It all seemed--well, there are politics in museums too, I guess. Especially one with as large a staff as that. Mr. Hightower has since been dismissed.

Nathan: Has he had something to do with the National Endowment for the Arts?

Haas: I hope not. I don't know! [Laughter]

Nathan: Are you familiar with the National Endowment for the Arts?

Haas: Well, I know the head of it, Nancy Hanks. Not very well, but she's a great friend of Marianne Goldman, who occupied her apartment, I think, in New York, when Nancy went to Washington. I have met her two or three times. I think this is a very great thing, because it is impossible to continue to support the arts without federal assistance. One doesn't want the kind that will control what you do, but opera, symphony, museums, artists themselves, need help.

Nathan: You feel then that the individual enthusiasts and philanthropists will not be able to continue to support art at the level that is required for development?

Haas: I don't know for how long. You see, the whole picture is changing so. Young people have been brought up in an affluent society, so they see, really, not much value in money, because they've had it, and those who've left home, many of them, have been supported by their parents. It's a difficult thing for anyone of my generation to understand, and certainly more difficult to accept. I read somewhere that now they're beginning to feel that they want to earn money in order to have the things they want, but I don't know how many of this generation are going to want to go into business. They want to go into the professions, particularly the law, which is good training for anything, I must say. I can only say that in my opinion the young people of today, so many of them, are turned in, not on. They speak of love, but they love themselves more than they love others. It's like two sides of a coin: those who have rejected all responsibility, for anything, and those who are more socially conscious of inequities in our society, than any other young people of any other age.

So, in spite of all the upheavals and everything, I think they're going to accomplish a great deal. I'm glad I'm not going to live in this world very long, because in so many instances, in people of every age, I think integrity, quality, are not valued any more. I think this will have to come back, because this is the basis of life. But things are shoddy, ill-made. Everything is being done to reduce everybody to a common denominator. And of course I'm a great believer in quality. I don't think that it's going to be a very interesting world if that happens.

Nathan: I take it that excellence is something that you--

Haas: I value highly.

Nathan: It's hard to believe that there won't always be some people who feel this way.

Haas: There will be. There will be. There always have been, and you're not going to change everything. During periods of illness, where I really didn't feel like reading anything, I was given a book by a

Haas: friend of mine, by Georgette Heyer, a woman who wrote very light romantic novels, but extremely well written, and extremely well researched, about the Regency period. These were written about the nobility, the well-born. Devoted servants who stayed with them all their lives, and dozens of them. The cits, who were the merchants of the city, were looked down upon, as socially so inferior that they weren't even talked about. Heiresses were greatly in demand. That was not particularly unique. I mean, that has happened in all generations, of course.

And as far as the Jews were concerned, they were usurers, and despised, and to be avoided if possible. The nobility were great gamblers, but they had absolutely no idea of poverty. It was just so completely out of their consciousness it's hard to believe, that they were not aware of the majority of people who were poverty-stricken. And those who were employed were so dependent on the wages they were paid that they didn't dare ever leave. Quite a revelation to me.

You know, I should have known, I suppose. This particular stratum of society is all she wrote about. Of course I guess it was really during the Victorian age that in England certain laws were passed--the shortening of the hours children were allowed to work. I think that social conscience really awoke then. I'm not enough of an historian to remember, but I don't think people were too aware of the misery of the masses. I really don't. And now that's all that's talked about.

Nathan: Yes, that's a very interesting observation. It is completely the other aspect.

Haas: And it should be. People's lots should be raised. But you can't do it overnight.

Nathan: Yes. In looking over your activities I keep coming back to the very interesting museum work of yours, and it reminded me to ask you about a couple of shows, to see whether you wanted to comment on them. There was apparently a Klee exhibit that Grace McCann Morley put on. Is this something you remember?

Haas: I don't actually remember the show, because I wasn't connected with the museum then. My mother was on the board. You see, I took her place on the board when she resigned, the Women's Board. But I do remember there was a Klee show, and I heard this later. Dr. Morley urged the trustees to buy, because they were about \$400.

Nathan: Oh, really?

Haas: And we've had a couple of "plan-ins," which were luncheons--

Nathan: Plan-ins?

Haas: Plan-ins. There were a lot of good ideas brought out. My husband and I went for lunch and listened to the speakers, and then afterwards they broke up into groups, but we didn't stay, so I really don't know much about them, and nothing has ever come of anything of that kind.

I feel that we've been neglecting architecture of late. We have three architects on the board, and I really would like to have an architectural exhibition, if we could get up a good one.

Board Membership

Nathan: This brings me to another question. If it interests you, it might be worth talking about. What sorts of people do you look for to fill in a board? Are there special qualities or kinds of training, or just general interest?

Haas: We look for someone who hopefully is interested in art. We have taken the first artist, as such, on the board recently, although several years ago when I asked a friend of his who was an artist to go on, he refused. He said he felt an artist had no place on a board of directors. And in a way, I think perhaps he's right, because it's left up to the director to be in charge of the art end of the thing. It can be a cause of friction. I hope it's not going to be.

We look for people--well--we want people with money, if possible, because they are supposed to give a generous amount every year, which is really the backbone of the finances of a membership-supported museum, which ours is. Now, the other two are tax-supported, in this city, and we have to scratch for money terribly hard.

Nathan: You mentioned that you do get something from the hotel tax.

Haas: We do. We didn't get a raise last year, and we need a raise very much this year, because our costs are increasing because of the expansion of the museum. But unfortunately the hotels are in a bad fix, because the convention hall hasn't been built yet, and hotels are springing up like mushrooms all over the place, and are not fully occupied. So I don't know what's going to happen this year.

We are in a city-owned building, and we are supposed to be kept in good condition by the War Memorial Trustees Board, but our recent requests have been turned down. I think a great deal of

Haas: money has been spent on the Opera House to refurbish it, which was allowed to get into just dreadful condition. And so of course now we're going to have a practically new museum, but it will have to be kept up, and it will have to be kept up by the city, not by us. That's not our responsibility.

The War Memorial Board of Trustees

Haas: You see, Mayor Alioto changed the complexion of the board of trustees--the War Memorial Board of Trustees, because they had always been veterans. We once had a representative, because he just happened to be a member of the board. The opera has always had representation, and so has the symphony, although it only just moved their offices into our building a couple of years ago, I think. But Mayor Alioto put three women on the board, including his wife.

Have I told you the story of going to Mr. Mellon?

Nathan: No, I don't think I have it on the tape.

Haas: We gave a reception for the mayor, the board of trustees did, and I spoke to him for a few minutes, and I said, "This is no time to bring up something like this, but, you know, one's best work is done at social occasions. I would very much like to see our representative on the board. We're the only tenants of the veterans' complex that has not been represented on the War Memorial Trustees Board. And I hope, Mr. Mayor, that you would allow us to submit a list of people from whom you would choose one to put on the board." He said, "I will certainly give it consideration."

I went over to Tom Mellon, who was a very close personal friend of mine, and was discussing this and some other things, and he said, "Well, I happen to know that he intends to appoint Mose Lasky." So I rang up Mose Lasky and I said, "I had an appointment with the mayor to discuss this matter with him, of representation on the board, and I understand he intends to appoint you anyhow, so will you go with me, and not be surprised if he mentions it, and accept." He said, "All right!" And then he put on Madeleine Russell too, who is also a member of our board of trustees, and he put on Mrs. Cuneo--who had been very helpful--of the opera, and Mrs. Alioto.

So when we go to present requests, and we've had a great many to make, such as a red carpet in the lobby, and big graphic signs on glass, and the bookshop on the main floor, we've had a few friends at court.

Nathan: That is most helpful.

Haas: They had an idea in the beginning that they wanted to have some of our contemporary sculpture towards the right, you know, where we also have a front elevator and the dignity of a front entrance now. So they were going to put some modern sculpture there, and they were going to try to move George Washington over to the veterans' side. I said, "I'll bet you any amount of money you want, that he will not be moved one inch." [Laughter] And he has only moved one inch!

Museum History and Development

Nathan: This development of changes in the museum is fascinating. Can you tell a bit more concerning how it all came about?

Haas: Mr. Lasky, who had been made chairman of the War Memorial Board of Trustees, and had worked on one of the survey boards, to discuss another location, and who was very strong in the beginning for moving, came back with the recommendation of himself and his committee that we should stay where we were.

Our quarters have always been very limited. When the museum evolved from the California School of Fine Arts, the Veterans' Building and the Opera House were to be built, Mr. Charles Kendrick, I believe, was head of the committee to solicit private funds for this, and he got over \$700,000, but it wasn't enough, so they floated a bond issue. Of course the museum was to have occupied much more space in the building than we were finally allotted. Our entrance was put on McAllister Street, and not the front, Van Ness. The veterans occupied all of the building except the fourth floor, which was the museum. So the exhibition space and the offices were up there. We had quite inadequate space in the basement for storage.

Well, when Mr. Lasky advised the trustees and the president that now was the time to strike, which was about two years ago, as I said earlier we managed to obtain a front entrance, a front elevator, which had been transformed into something quite contemporary. We moved our bookshop to the first floor, and that too is very contemporary and beautiful. The fourth floor is in the process of renovation. We are getting the whole north side of the fourth floor for galleries, so that our gallery space is greatly enlarged, and we are putting in a small dining facility. I don't know what I should call it. It's not a cafeteria. But anyhow, it's such as they have at the Legion of Honor, for about fifty, so people can eat there.

Fund for the '70s and a Conservation Laboratory

- Haas: An idea occurred to me, because of my friendship with Mrs. Caroline Keck of Cooperstown, New York, who with her husband I consider two of the greatest conservators in the country, if not in the world. She has taught me the importance of maintaining paintings. So when we made our contribution to the "Fund for the Seventies" which our \$2,500,000 drive was called, as you know I specified that a certain amount be set aside for the installation of a conservation laboratory, to be the finest in the west. Although Los Angeles has a very good one, and a very large one, I knew they were so busy that if we wanted to have one of our paintings restored it would take a year before we could even be accepted. I felt there was a great need for this. So I hope that this will work.
- Nathan: In a conservation laboratory as you have described, in addition to repairing, does that also include cleaning and framing?
- Haas: Well, cleaning, restoring, restretching, if necessary--but not framing. Not re-framing. That's something else. Of course, one of the conditions that I hope they will observe--do you observe a condition? Or do you keep--what do you do with a condition? Maintain it?
- Nathan: Do you meet it? I'm not quite sure!
- Haas: Well, they've met it, for the moment, but will they continue? I certainly hope so--that the conservator that we engage be a graduate of the Kecks' school, because they have a school for training conservators. This Tony Rockwell wanted to come west. He was at the Wadsworth Atheneum and had been there for about nine years, I think. He wanted to come west for personal reasons, and when the Kecks gave him the recommendation, they said he was their best pupil. He's here now and working.
- He is qualified to restore paintings of any period, 16th Century on. It isn't just contemporary. So he is working for us two days a week, and then he takes collectors' paintings, or other museum paintings the other three days, if he wishes.
- Nathan: Does he have pupils?
- Haas: We are going to have interns. He's going to have a woman who has been a pupil of the Kecks', and then she does a summer's work, and then she takes work as an intern. We're going to have an intern from the Kecks for the summer, and in this they're making something of an exception. And then she will have a year's internship with us, and then she goes back to the Kecks to get her master's degree. Then she can take any position she wants.

Haas: We won't do paper work. Maybe some day we will, if we grow enough.

Nathan: When you say "paper work," do you mean graphics?

Haas: Yes.

Nathan: But that I gather is really an additional field?

Haas: Oh, yes. It's quite different.

Nathan: Well, in a sense this is almost like Kecks West, isn't it?

Haas: Kecks West! That's a very good name for it. [Laughing] I'm really giving this in their honor. I want a little plaque to go up.

Nathan: Right. Well, all these things you've done, including this one, seem very hopeful. They do build for the future. Very exciting, really.

Haas: Well, I don't know what the future is. Who does? Fortunately!

Nathan: It's nice to be prepared for it, if you possibly can be.

Perhaps just another word or two about the museum. Is the policy still to increase the holdings of the museum?

Accessions

Haas: Oh, yes. We unfortunately have very little money for accessions, but through gifts and our modest funds, we really have increased our collection quite sizeably. This last year was a banner year. We had the greatest attendance that we've ever had, which was largely due to "Four Americans in Paris," which brought, I think, an attendance of 96,000 people there, at least. When it was in New York, of course it was a larger show then, because they had some Russian works, which I think I remember saying came over on a warship. In all their history, they had never had so huge an attendance. People were lined up for blocks. Which shows that even in the modern museum, the painters that went before and have very great reputations are still of enormous interest, even to the young.

Nathan: Speaking a little more of the museum--

Haas: Well, I don't know. I think I've talked a lot about the museum, didn't I? That I took my mother's place on it?

Nathan: I think this was just mentioned. Do you recall some of the people with whom your mother served? I have a list of the early members of the Women's Board.

Boards Serving the Museum

Haas: May I see it just a minute? I know she was on--well, this was Mrs. Helen Crocker Russell. I don't know if she was married at that time. She and her brother were really the people who were most influential in starting it. She was the first president of the Women's Board.

Then the activities board was founded later; as the pioneers became somewhat older, they formed this membership activities board, as it was called, to do some of the more strenuous work, giving parties and things like that. It was felt that the Women's Board was really the heart of the museum and gave it life. When my mother resigned, I was put on in her place. This was the one organization that really interested me. I had given up all my other boards when I started to do sculpture. I wasn't interested in outside activities any more. I felt I had done enough. But when this came along, I was really very pleased.

I think they made me secretary, and my husband used to say when I toiled over my reports, "You act as though you were writing a literary piece of work." I said, "It has to sound like it!"

After about three years I felt I really wasn't pulling my weight and perhaps somebody else would be more useful to them. I was considering resigning when I got a telephone call that Mrs. Russell and Mr. Crocker and one or two others would like to come and see me. In those days the trustees had the choosing of the president of the Women's Board. Mrs. Russell had resigned two years before that, and Mrs. Jerd Sullivan had become president for two years. This very important group came up to ask me to take the presidency of the Women's Board, when I felt that I wasn't carrying my own weight, and should get off! It was a very great surprise to me.

We had a revolving board in those days, as did the board of trustees. My presidential term lasted for two years, and then I revolved off the board, and was put back after a year's interval. I must say that while I had always enjoyed working with a mixed board of men and women, this is the only woman's board that I have

Haas: ever enjoyed as much. They were all dedicated to the museum. They were all intelligent, lively, creative people. We used to put on all kinds of events for the museum, which were really a lot of work, but more than worth it.

Then--I told you, I think, that Dr. Morley was separated from the museum, which was about two years before the usual retirement age, and I think it was unfortunate. Although she was difficult, she was extremely knowledgeable and had the "seeing eye," which is very important.

She was very devoted to my mother, and my mother to her. She, in the end, blamed me for her dismissal. I had absolutely nothing to do with it. But she had to find a scapegoat, I think. As I mentioned, she's now in India. She still gets a pension from the museum, although we have no pension fund, and there were no conditions whatsoever about her earning additional money. She is head of the National Museum in India now, and has been for many years.

SOME NOTABLE PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The Barnes Collection

Nathan: Thinking again about private collections, did you say that Matisse mentioned the Barnes collection?

Haas: Yes. Matisse had said, "Of course you've seen the Barnes collection," and I said, "No, Mr. Matisse, I haven't." The Barnes collection is right outside Philadelphia. It is a very remarkable collection. Mr. Barnes made it into a school for art students, so he could keep the public out. He was something of an old curmudgeon.

Matisse said, "Oh, I'll fix that up! No trouble at all." He called for a tablet and a pen, and he wrote, "Dear Mr. Barnes, I'm glad to have heard from you recently. I'm glad that I was of help. Some very dear friends of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Haas, are visiting me, and they have never seen your great collection. I would be so happy for them to have this opportunity that I'm sure you'll grant them." Or something like that. I think I sent the note over to The Bancroft Library already.

We couldn't go then. We flew straight home. In the meantime, the poor selfish man (Barnes) was killed in an automobile accident. So I had a photostatic copy of the letter made (naturally, I wasn't going to give the letter up) and sent it to Mrs. Barnes with a little note saying that we were going to be in New York, and it would be a great privilege to see the collection. We got the regular printed notice back. So that was that. Even Matisse couldn't get us in.

However, around that time, Mr. Annenberg, who is now our ambassador to England, and who had been entertained by us and who had quite a big collection, and was the publisher of quite an important paper, became interested in the Barnes collection. He brought a taxpayers' suit against Barnes to force him to admit the public. I sent Mr. Annenberg a copy of my letter from Matisse and the answer to help him in the case. But he lost.

Haas: In time, the rules were relaxed, and I think 200 people a day were admitted, first come, first served. I still didn't go because one had to stand in line. Then some dealer in New York offered to get us in, and he did. It was absolutely superb. I saw the final version of the "Joie de Vivre," which is of course much larger than our oil sketch. Matisse made only two sketches of it in oil, and of course we have one. I thought our sketch had much more liveliness, much more spontaneity and was much finer than the finished work. Sometimes even the best painters overpaint.

Barnes had Renoirs, many, many of them. Other Matisses, too. There were so many. Works of art can be overwhelming. No pictures are allowed to be taken, and there was no catalogue, which was very disappointing.

Nathan: That is interesting. Didn't you also see Norton Simon's collection?

Norton Simon's Pictures

Haas: Yes. Some years ago, I was in Los Angeles, and I asked the then director of the Pasadena Art Museum if he thought I could obtain permission to see Norton Simon's paintings, which were then in his home. He secured it and took me there himself. I was deeply impressed by the quality of his choice. Every painting was a masterpiece, and as I remember, most of them were of the Impressionist school. He had only become interested in art in the previous eight years. In his bedroom was an alcove with a daybed, which he evidently used. The floor was piled high next to it with books on art. Recently, since his collection has increased so vastly, and there are so many on loan at the Los Angeles County Museum, I asked his sister if he still bought out of love, or merely recognized that they were all great paintings and should be in his collection, without being particularly drawn to them, as I am sure he was when he first started to collect. She said that she thought the latter was possibly true.

Edward G. Robinson's Collection

Haas: I also remember visiting Edward G. Robinson's collection, the first time, before he had added the wing. I particularly remember the beautiful vase of flowers, which was at the foot of the stairs as you came down, and the wonderful Cézanne in the drawing room.

Haas: Two or three years later I called him up when I was in Los Angeles after he had built the wing for his paintings to ask him if I might come and see them again. And he said, rather crossly, "Well, you've already seen them." And I said, "Well, I have a particular reason. First of all, they're in a new setting, but most of all, I have two friends here, distant relatives of the Robert Haases, who are deeply interested in art, and it would be a great privilege for them too, to see your works of art."

"Oh," he said, "all right. The butler's out, but that's all right. You come along." So he opened the door himself, and then we went into the wing. They were quite overwhelmed, as I was, by the beauty of his choice, of what he had bought.

Nathan: What sorts of things did he seem to like?

Haas: Well, there was Rouault, Cézanne--you know, those greats. After a while two other visitors were announced. They both came from Israel. One was a young man, and the other was a red-haired girl who was a poetess. And Zero Mostel also came. There was a great beautiful painting of Christ. I don't remember if it was a Rouault or not. I really do not remember the artist. But Zero Mostel began posturing in front of this painting. And then they all started to chatter in Yiddish, which none of the rest of us understood! So we took our leave.

Nathan: Had you known Edward G. Robinson in any other connection at all?

Haas: Only on the screen. I really think that it was a terrible deprivation, because of his real love for paintings, which not all collectors have. But he did. When he and his wife were divorced, the collection was broken up and sold. Though I understand he has collected since, I don't think he has been able to secure the artists that he had in his first collection.

Nathan: I suppose a collection sort of takes on a life of its own.

Haas: Yes. Well, now I think Niarchos has a lot of it on his yacht. Not Jackie's Onassis, but one of the Niarchos brothers.

Nathan: Does it make a difference in the appreciation of a painting whether or not it is in company of others, or does it have its own--

Haas: I think it has its own life. I think it stands out if it's with inferior things, certainly, but it has a life of its own. If it's great enough.

Lurçat Tapestries at Home

Nathan: I was thinking really when you had become interested in sculpture, and painting, and then did you also develop an interest in tapestries?

Haas: No, I just like beautiful things. I have always loved beautiful things. My mother gave me the Lurçat screen, which we have in the dining room, and which was displayed in the French Pavilion of the Exposition of--

Nathan: The one here? '39, perhaps?

Haas: '39. Yes, this other tapestry I bought at an exhibition of Lurçat tapestries out at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. It was to serve as the motif for our new dining room in a house that was being planned, which we never built. It hung on the white wall here, and really didn't show to very good advantage. One day I had a little man mending my living room rug, which I discovered was Turkish, and I saw him turning the tapestry over to look at the wrong side. I said, "Why do you happen to do that?" He said, "Well, you know, it's as well-woven as any rug."

Well, I wasn't happy with the way it looked on the wall, so in two seconds flat it was on the floor, the black floor, and has been there ever since. Of course, this is exactly what it needed!

Nathan: Does it have a name?

Haas: Yes. It's called "The World Upside Down."

Nathan: So, you walk on a Lurçat tapestry every day.

Haas: I discovered the other day that there was a bad rip, so I called on my friend Mark Adams. It happened to be where somebody could easily trip over it. So he brought someone up who makes draperies. There were a great many rents that I hadn't seen, which often happens to them, he tells me, even when they're on the wall. I suppose from the weight. I don't know. She mended it with nylon thread, and then of course it has to be cleaned by hand every so often. But it doesn't wear out. So I feel justified in having it on the floor.

Nathan: Definitely.

A Tour

Nathan: Do you find that people seek to see your own private collection?

Haas: Oh, I have a great many requests, yes. I've only had one tour, thank goodness.

Nathan: [Laughing] Now, how did you come to do that?

Haas: I think a group in Los Angeles, probably from the County Museum, wrote and asked me, and there were not a great number, so I was willing to have them come. My daughter-in-law helped me (it was her suggestion, really, Evie's) compile a few typed sheets saying what was in each room, so that that made it much easier, and it was something they could keep if they wanted.

Nathan: Do you still have those sheets? Or have you changed--

Haas: I have a copy. Oh, I've changed, but not very much. No, not very much.

Nathan: What do you do, when people come? Do you make yourself scarce?

Haas: Oh, no. I always am there. I never let anyone come unless I'm here, which limits the visits. I'm always interested in their reactions.

I don't know if I told you this incident of the young man from the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art? He rang me up a few weeks ago and said that he worked for Mr. Rasmussen, who is the director of the International Council, to which I belong, and Mr. Rasmussen had sent his greetings to me. Of course I said, as I had many times before, "Would you like to come up, come for cocktails," which of course is always the easiest. But I found I was busy, so I said, "Come for lunch."

The bell rang, and nobody seemed to hear it, so I opened the door, and there stood a young man in faded, ragged jeans and jacket, with long hair and spectacles, a very pleasant, mild face. However, I was rather taken aback at the way someone from the Modern Museum was dressed. And we had a cocktail, and lunch, and then he sat for a bit.

Anyhow, my secretary was here, and I just was impatient to get back to work with her. And he stayed and he stayed. Finally I went back to show him my DeHory-Matisse. So I stepped into the room she was working in, and I said, "For heaven's sake, will that young man never leave?" So, she being a smart girl, came in two

Haas: seconds later and handed me a note, which said, "Shall I come in and remind you of your three o'clock appointment?" And I said, "Yes."

Well, then he began to make motions of leaving, and said to me, "I'm very embarrassed to ask you this. Mrs. Haas, I'm awfully strapped for cash, for money. Waldo told me I should bring enough, and I thought I had, but I'm going to stay three more days, and I only have \$100, which will pay my hotel bill, but I have nothing for food." So I said, "Well, how much do you want?" Such a request had never been made of me before. And so he said, "Well, \$20 would be fine."

Nathan: For three days?

Haas: For three days. So I went back and I came back with \$25 and I said, "You know, I don't keep much money in the house." He said, "I'll make you out a check," which he proceeded to do, and thanked me, and said, "I hope my wife hasn't used up everything that will be put in on the first of the month--in the bank."

Well, when my husband came home, and I described this man to him, he was absolutely horrified that I, without any identification, had let a stranger into the house. And I said, "But, Wally, he came from Rasmussen." "Well, what identification did he have?" I said, "I never thought to ask." Mr. Rasmussen had not given him a letter, which I think was careless, true. He said, "Anything could have happened! How could you do such a stupid thing?" I said, "Well, I've done those stupid things for years without a thought, without knowing who is calling me." I got a lecture from my maid, and my daughter-in-law Evie said to me, "He was probably casing the joint." [Laughter]

By that time I was really quite shaken about the whole episode and worrying about the fact that he might be casing the joint. So I decided after two days I was going to stop worrying. I rang up Mr. Rasmussen in New York and I said to him that Mr. whatever his name was--I'd invited him to lunch and I was surprised at the casual way in which he was dressed. I said, "Perhaps things have changed at the museum. I've heard a great many stories." And he said, "Yes, they have changed." And I said, "You know, he also borrowed money from me." And he said, "Yes, I know."

Evidently, the man was back and had told him the whole thing.

Nathan: He was perfectly genuine?

Haas: He was completely genuine, which relieved me greatly. I don't think I'll mend my ways, but I will make a little more sure of who's coming. Among other people, our young man who has a gallery in London, asked to see my things. Well, I let him come. I do enjoy having people who appreciate them, but I'm also very amused by their reactions.

For instance, this young man from the Modern said he thought it was very necessary for the staff to get around the country and see collections. It was very useful. On the other hand, I thought that the things that he noticed and the remarks he made did not show great knowledge of anything.

Nathan: He was insufficiently trained, perhaps?

Haas: Probably. He might just have been a secretary, keeping records and not, you know, involved in art and just wanted to know more about it. My cousin Mrs. Russell said that she had had a phone call from him, and would I come for lunch if she could make it for the next day. I told her simply not to bother, and she didn't. You always know when somebody's knowledgeable and when it's worth while to have somebody come. But you don't always know ahead of time. So I think I'll make the visits fewer.

It's good to share, and I think paintings look much better in a home.

Nathan: Yes, I can see that they do.

You have shared in many ways, including these perceptive and illuminating conversations. The interview sessions are full of interest, and it is pleasant to know that others will share in them over the years as well.

Thank you.

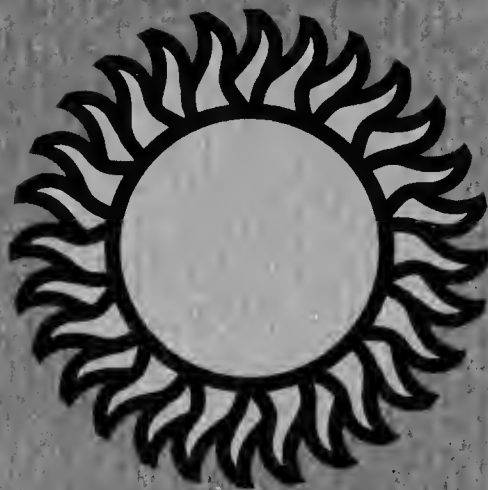
APPENDICES

Brochure, Strawberry Canyon Recreation Area

Program, A Service of Dedication, Temple Emanu-El

History: Sigmund Stern Grove, Midsummer Music Festival

Additional materials are on deposit in The Bancroft Library



STRAWBERRY CANYON

RECREATIONAL AREA

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

About the Donors

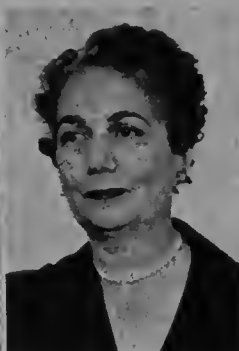
Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Haas have long maintained an active interest in the welfare of the University of California. They contributed funds for construction of the Elise and Walter Haas Clubhouse, and, more recently, contributed substantially toward the cost of the East Pool. Mr. Haas, a graduate of the Class of 1910, has been of great service to the University through the California Alumni Association. He also serves on the Advisory Council for the School of Business Administration. For his many activities on behalf of the University, he was awarded an honorary LL.D. degree and in 1970 was chosen as the Alumnus of the Year. Professionally he is Honorary Chairman of the Board of Levi Strauss & Company of San Francisco, holds directorial and advisory posts in a number of other businesses, and with Mrs. Haas is active in the civic and cultural life of the Bay Area.

The late Lucie Stern, Mrs. Haas's aunt, made possible the construction of the Lucie Stern Pool through a generous bequest to the University and continued a family tradition of outstanding service to the University. (Mrs. Haas's mother, Mrs. Rosalie M. Stern, was the donor of Stern Hall, a residence hall for women students on the Berkeley campus.) Funds from the Lucie Stern estate have also provided for programs of research in medicine, gifts and grants-in-aid to students, and a music listening room in Residence Hall Unit 1.

The Strawberry Canyon Recreational Area is a recreational and social facility designed for the use of members of the University of California community at Berkeley. Opened in 1959, it has proved to be a valuable addition to campus life.



Mr. Haas



Mrs. Haas



Mrs. Stern

Approximately 150,000 persons use the Area annually. The surrounding area is one of considerable interest to naturalists and nature lovers. Strawberry Canyon has a long history as an outdoor laboratory for teaching and research dealing with plant and animal life. The University's Botanical Gardens, a short hike up the Canyon, are a special attraction, and hikers will also find trails through the surrounding hills.

Facilities

The outstanding features of the Area—the Elise and Walter Haas Clubhouse, the Lucie Stern Pool, and East Pool—provide facilities for a wide range of social and recreational activities for students, faculty, and staff. Just inside the entrance to the Area, there is an attractive barbecue-picnic area with redwood tables and benches and two barbecues. Play apparatus and a wading pool are available for small children. Adjacent to the Area are six tennis courts and a playing field.

Haas Clubhouse

The upper level of the clubhouse consists of a clubroom, recreation room, and kitchen facilities, and is surrounded by a broad sundeck. It was designed for flexibility of function. The rooms are adaptable for dances, meetings, dramatic activities, lectures, discussions, and similar activities for groups of up to 300 persons. A piano, record player, and a P.A. system are available for use in the club and recreation rooms. *The rooms and the swimming pools may be rented by approved student groups, and by faculty and staff personnel of the University. Reservations may be made at the Area office daily, weekends excepted. A schedule of rates for the rental of the facilities and other information may be obtained from the Area office.*

The ground level of the Clubhouse is primarily oriented toward swimming, other athletic activities, and administration. On this floor are the main offices, equipment room, bathhouse control center, snack room (equipped with vending machines), and bathhouse with shower and locker facilities. Locks, towels, and bathing suits are not provided; lockers are available on a daily basis only. Ping pong equipment may be checked out at the Valuables Check Room at no charge.

The Pools

The pools heated to 80°, are open from March 25 through October 31. Stern Pool is designed for use by children as well as adults. It ranges in depth from 2½ feet in the shallow end to 10 feet in the diving area. The East Pool is open for persons 16 years of age and older. This pool ranges in depth from 4½ feet to 11½ feet, has two diving boards—a one-meter and a three-meter—and six standard AAU swim lanes of 75 feet. Lifeguards are on duty whenever the pools are open.

POOL SCHEDULE—1977

Monday through Friday

12 noon to 6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday—

11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

March 25 through October 31

NOTE: From June 14–September 2 the pools will remain open until 7 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday evenings.

Eligibility

The Strawberry Canyon Recreational Area is intended for use by all members of the Berkeley campus community. Membership privilege cards are obtained in the following manner:

Students

Students are admitted free to the Area upon presentation of their current registration cards. Students not registered for the spring quarter may purchase a spring privilege card for \$2.00 upon presentation of their winter registration card. Spring and Summer Students are admitted at a \$2.00 charge during the summer upon presentation of their current registration card.

Student families

Spouse privilege cards may be purchased for \$2.00 for the spring quarter (March 25–June 17), and \$3.00 for the summer sessions (June 17–October 31).

Student children may be included on a spouse privilege card for an additional fee of \$2.00 for the spring quarter, and \$3.00 for the summer session.

Members of summer institutes may purchase student privilege cards valid only for the duration of the institute.

Staff—Academic and nonacademic*

Staff privilege cards are sold on a seasonal basis. Staff privilege cards may be purchased for \$10.00. At time of purchase, evidence of association with the University (such as listing in the Campus Directory, paycheck stub, identification badge, or written statement from department head) is to be presented.

A spouse or children may be included on a staff privilege card for an additional fee of \$10.00. A full family membership is \$30.00, plus \$5.00 for families with more than 2 children.

Staff personnel beginning work September 1 may purchase a family privilege card for \$10.00—valid for use in September and October only.

Persons 25 years of age and older may qualify for membership only as students or staff members.

Single admission tickets

Individuals who are eligible for membership but do not wish to purchase a privilege card may purchase single admission tickets for \$1.50 per visit.

Guests

The guest fee is \$1.25 per visit. Any Strawberry Canyon privilege card holder may purchase a 15-swim guest pass for \$15.00, which is valid only for the year issued. Lost cards may not be replaced except by purchasing a new card for \$15.00. There will be no refund of any unused portion of the pass.

Payment of fees

Privilege cards may be purchased only at the Area Office. Payment may be in cash or by check made payable to The Regents of the University of California. Cards are on sale daily, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Saturdays and Sundays during the hours the Area is open for swimming. There is a \$2.00 charge for the replacement of lost or destroyed cards.

* This group includes personnel of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Berkeley and Livermore; Richmond Field Station; and the University staff members from the San Francisco Medical Center and Hastings College of the Law, staff members of the California Alumni Association, the ASUC, military personnel assigned to the ROTC program, nonacademic Extension staff, and International House staff.

Area Regulations

1. Children under 12 years should be accompanied by a parent or an adult member.
2. Parents are expected to maintain close supervision over children. For reasons of safety, children are not permitted to play on the upper level of Haas Clubhouse.
3. Bathers must soap and shower before entering the pools.
4. Bottles, food, and drinks are not permitted on the pool decks.
5. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the Area (except for approved group reservations).
6. Dogs and other pets are not permitted in the Area.

Swimming Instruction

Swimming lessons are available for tots, children, and adults who are eligible users of the Strawberry Canyon Recreational Area.

Tots

Children aged 3, 4, and 5 now have the opportunity to take swimming lessons at the Strawberry Canyon Recreational Area. The cost is \$5.00 for ten half-hour lessons. The classes will start at 10:30 a.m. daily, Monday through Friday. Registration in person begins at 9 a.m. April 11 upon payment of fee at the Area Office. A 6:15 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. class for sessions II and III are also planned. No refunds after registration.

Session I: May 9-20

Session II: May 23-June 3

Session III: June 6-17

Children

Swimming and diving instruction, based on American Red Cross standards, is offered to children from age 6 through 16. The fee is \$10.00 per pupil for 10 one-hour lessons, Monday through Friday. Swim classes are held at 9:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Advanced lifesaving classes (first and third sessions only) are held from 9:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., and the cost is \$15.00 per pupil. A Water Safety Instructors' class will be offered this summer.

Session I: June 20-July 1

Session II: July 4-July 15

Session III: July 18-July 29

Swimming classes are limited to six children per instructor when possible. Registration begins at 9 a.m. April 25 upon payment of fee at the Area Office. No refunds after registration.

Adults

Beginner and intermediate swimming lessons for adults will now be offered at the Strawberry Canyon Recreational Area. The cost for 10 one-hour lessons is \$10.00. Classes will be held at 11 a.m. and 6:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. Registration in person begins at 9 a.m. April 11 upon payment of fee at the Area Office.

No refunds after registration.

Spring Session I: May 9-20

Session II: May 23-June 3

Session III: June 6-17

Fall Session I: Sept. 5-16

Session II: Sept. 19-30

CHILDREN'S RECREATION SCHOOL

The Children's Recreation School will again this year be held at the Strawberry Canyon Recreational Area. Any child who is 8 through 14 years of age is eligible. The program begins August 1 and concludes September 2. It includes swimming, field sports, and optional activities such as tennis, music, archery, arts and crafts, hiking, and nature study. The cost of the five week program is \$60.00 per child. Further information may be obtained from the Supervisor's Office at Haas Clubhouse.

Spring and summer gymnastic classes are planned. Call 642-5575 for more program and area information.



§ A Service of Dedication §

WINDOW DESIGN BY MARK ADAMS
FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION
BY THE GEORGE MCKEEVER STUDIOS

A GIFT FROM
MR. AND MRS. WALTER A. HAAS

*At the 5:30 Sabbath Eve Service
on Friday, June 16, 1972,
the new West Window of the Temple
will be dedicated to the memory
of Fannie and Abraham Haas and
Rosalie and Sigmund Stern.
We invite you to worship with us
on this significant occasion.*



CONGREGATION EMANU-EL
ARGUELLO AND LAKE • SAN FRANCISCO

STERN GROVE FESTIVAL ASSOCIATIONFACT SHEET I

2100 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94115
Contact: Elizabeth D. Eastlund, 552-3134

RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT

McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, California 94117
Public Info.: Joyce Jansen, 558-4268

April, 1968

HISTORY: SIGMUND STERN GROVE, MIDSUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

- 1847 The Greene family came from Maine and homesteaded a San Francisco land grant, part of which is the present site of Stern Grove, a beautiful wooded valley lying 100' below street level at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. Alfred Greene's house, shipped prefabricated from Maine around the Horn, was the first San Francisco home west of Twin Peaks.
- 1871 George M. Greene, son of one of the original settlers, planted the property with eucalyptus trees which grew up to become the present Grove. Forming a natural shelter against wind and fog, these trees are the basis for citizens' claims that Stern Grove is the warmest outdoor area in San Francisco by a good ten degrees in most weather conditions. "Holland grass" planted at the same time kept the sand dunes from shifting.
- 1887 Congress passed a Special Act clearing Greene's title to the property. He had defended his right of possession against all odds for the preceding 20 years, through legendary skirmishes which involved dynamite, scalding water, gun battles, and the building of a metal-lined fort on the grounds.
- 1892 George M. Greene built a public hotel on the site called the "Trocadero", which still stands at Stern Grove. With weekend cabins, a deer park, beer garden, restaurant, open-air dancing pavillion, a lake for rowing, and the finest trout farm in California, the "Troc" became a favorite resort of the City's elite, including C. A. Hooper, Adolph Spreckles, Arctic explorer Dr. Frederick Cook, and David S. Terry (of duel fame). Some living San Franciscans recall going there to "moonlight picnics" via trolley on the Market Street railway in a specially designed heavily curtained charter car.
- 1906 The Trocadero Inn became Abe Ruef's hideout when the Ruef-Schmidt machine was smashed after the 1906 fire. Bullet holes still in the door of the Hansel-and-Gretel style structure at Stern Grove date from this period.
- 1916 Greene closed the flourishing "Troc" to the public. With the coming advent of prohibition he "did not want a bootlegger situation there."

(more....)

Grove history (contd.)

Page 2

1917 The Twin Peaks Tunnel was completed. Forest Hills, St. Francis Woods and other growing residential developments West of Twin Peaks absorbed much of Greene's land, which had originally run clear from Mount Davidson to the Pacific Ocean. George Greene kept the heart of the property, or Stern Grove, for himself, and moved into the Trocadero to live.

1919 Mrs. Sigmund Stern was appointed President of the San Francisco Playground Commission.

1931 Mrs. Stern bought the "Troc" and 12 acres of Greene's land and gave them to the City and County of San Francisco in memory of her husband. The tract was deeded to the City in a document dated September 16, 1931, with the express provision that the land be used for recreational purposes only, to become a living means of carrying on Mr. and Mrs. Stern's dedicated civic service work.

1932 The City changed the name of the Playground Commission to Recreation Commission. Mrs. Stern remained as President.

Stern Grove was dedicated in an official ceremony on June 4, 1932. On June 19, 1932, Gaetano Merola, of the San Francisco Opera, conducted the first concert in the beautiful natural outdoor amphitheatre. Privately sponsored by Mrs. Stern, proceeds of the event were given to the relief fund for unemployed musicians.

1932 Park Site Development: Through further purchases by the City and by Mrs. Stern, the Grove park site was completed to its present 33.456 acres. With the Pine Lake tract adjoining the Grove on the West, a total of some 63 acres is now preserved here for public enjoyment.

Mrs. Stern consulted Bernard Maybeck about the development of the Grove as a playground and open-air concert place. He and his associate, William Gladstone Merchant, gave their plans and their time free to the project "in consideration of what she was doing for the City."

The Trocadero Inn was historically restored to become a popular City facility, available free to local organizations for recreational purposes. A stage pavillion was built in the heart of the valley; it was carefully designed to capitalize on the unusual natural accoustic of the Grove's wooded slopes for outdoor concerts. Careful landscaping enhanced the site, leaving its natural beauty unspoiled. Under a WPA project, some 75 men went to work to build paths and walkways through the park, using basalt brick discarded from the streets of downtown San Francisco. Facilities

were thus created which turned the area into a quiet retreat for harried city dwellers.

Concert Development: Meantime, at the Grove occasional concerts were given. Sponsored by Mrs. Stern, and played by units of the Federal Music Project, they continued to provide funds for the relief of unemployed musicians. Alexander Fried of the San Francisco Examiner on August 20, 1933, referred to a Beethoven concert at the Grove as "like the Hollywood Bowl." The public was enthusiastic in its response to these ventures, and demanded more, through letters to the Press and to Mrs. Stern.

1938

Mrs. Sigmund Stern founded the Stern Grove Festival Association to present the Midsummer Music Festivals at Stern Grove in cooperation with the San Francisco Recreation Department. Pioneer members of the Association's Committee, of which Mrs. Stern served as Chairman until her death in 1956, were:

Albert M. Bender	Mrs. Philip Lilienthal
Mrs. Sydney Joseph	Miss Alicia Mosgrove
Mrs. Isabel Stine Leis	Mrs. Selby C. Oppenheimer
Mrs. Stanley Powell	

Advisory: Gaetano Merola
 Josephine D. Randall
 Raymond S. Kimbell

The group was described as "civic-minded San Franciscans featuring prominent local and international talent," and through their contributions, the Festival's first season presented a wide variety of programs free to an eager public. The outdoor concerts, which also featured picnic refreshments, were the first major summer music activity in San Francisco; and San Francisco was the first American city to present public programs of this calibre without admission.

1939

The Festival began to receive support from the Publicity and Advertising Fund of the City of San Francisco in recognition of its service to the public.

1940

A concert for Allied War Relief held at Sigmund Stern Grove on September 14th, (Bruno Walter conducting, Kerstin Thorborg guest artist) yielded major funds to the cause.

1942

The Association was incorporated as a non-profit charitable trust, with the purpose of recreation for the welfare and benefit of all people.

Sunday picnics with community singing were held for service men at Sigmund Stern Grove.

The first big public military band concert given in San Francisco since the outbreak of the war was held at Stern Grove on July 5th. 100 men, including members of three service bands, performed under the sponsorship of the Consolidated Army Bands.

- 1943 The first half of the opening concert of the Midsummer Music Festival conducted by Gaetano Merola was broadcast nationally. This was described by the Press as "aligning the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra with others which give concerts at the Dell (Philadelphia,) and Ravinia (Chicago)."
- 1948 The Festival was granted support by the newly created Music Performance Trust Funds in cooperation with the Musicians' Union, Local No.6, in recognition of the free concerts' services to the public. It has been accorded this support continuously ever since.
- 1950 The San Francisco Recreation Commission was merged with the Park Commission, and Mrs. Sigmund Stern remained as President of the joint body.
- 1956 Mrs. Sigmund Stern died. Mrs. Walter A. Haas, her daughter, became Chairman of the Stern Grove Festival Association.
- 1958 Mrs. Haas appointed Ferenc Molnar, concert artist and professor, as Program Director of the Midsummer Music Festival, to maintain and further its important service to San Francisco. The administration of the Festival was placed with the Frederic Burk Foundation at San Francisco State College.
- 1963 Elizabeth D. Eastlund was appointed Executive Secretary of the Association in January, incorporating Festival Administration in that position.
- The program celebrated its 25th Anniversary by presenting the renowned singer, Jan Peerce, as soloist of the opening season concert on June 23rd. The gala season attracted national and international attention, and attendance increased 50%.
- 1964 The Committee decided to maintain national opening soloists in the Festival program format with Robert Weede in 1964, Licia Albanese in 1965, and Mary Costa in 1966, thus sustaining attendance records.

(more.....)

- 1965 Henry Albert White was appointed Concert Manager of the Festival.
- 1966 The Stern Grove Festival inaugurated its first jazz concert on July 23rd. The event drew record-breaking crowds to what became known affectionately as "Jazz in the Groove," and was covered by the Bell Telephone Hour for national telecast the following winter.
- 1967 The new Western Opera Theatre of the San Francisco Opera made its debut at Stern Grove in Rossini's "Barber of Seville" in English.
- 1968 The American Conservatory Theatre will debut at Stern Grove on June 30th in a production of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" with the Mendelssohn music, as a special feature of the Festival's 30th Anniversary season.

STERN GROVE FESTIVAL ASSOCIATIONFACT SHEET II

2100 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94115
 Contact: Elizabeth D. Eastlund, 552-3134

RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT

McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park
 San Francisco, California 94117
 Public Info.: Joyce Jansen, 558-4268

April, 1968

FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE RECORD: SIGMUND STERN GROVE,
 MIDSUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Programs</u>	<u>Total Attendance</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>
1938	12	55,000	4,508
1939	21	95,328	4,539
1940	15	58,973	3,931
1941	15	92,214	6,147
1942	14	82,200	5,871
1943	15	149,474	9,965
1944	14	157,634	11,259
1945	15	161,145	10,743
1946	15	169,031	11,268
1947	15	158,537	10,569
1948	15	176,451	11,763
1949* (*closed 3	12*	148,052*	12,337
1950 weeks	15	167,218	11,944
1951 because of	15	163,000	10,866
1952 falling	15	164,000	10,933
1953 trees)	15	166,338	11,089
1954	15	142,366	9,491
1955	15	154,686	10,312
1956	14	122,129	8,723
1957	11	128,800	11,709
1958	11	103,000	9,363
1959	11	120,300	10,936
1960	11	127,000	11,545
1961	11	116,000	10,545
1962	11	110,000	10,000
1963	11	147,500	13,409
1964	11	140,500	12,772
1965	11	134,000	12,181
1966	11	151,500	13,772
1967	11	142,795	12,981
Total	403	4,005,171	

STERN GROVE FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

2100 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94115

Contact: Elizabeth D. Eastlund, 552-3134

RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT

McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park

San Francisco, California 94117

Public Information: Joyce Jansen, 558-4268

April, 1968

HISTORY: FESTIVAL PROGRAMS

Traditionally the Stern Grove Festival has brought the best of San Francisco symphony, ballet and musical theatre programs free to the public in an unsurpassed outdoor setting. Artists of international distinction have appeared at Stern Grove; promising local talent has been discovered here in a broad spectrum of programming. The following are among those who have performed at Stern Grove through the years, listed in chronological order of first appearance.

GROUPSINSTRUMENTAL

S. F. Symphony

S. F. Municipal Symphony

S. F. Recreation Symphony

Junior Civic Symphony Orchestra

(founded by Mrs. Sigmund Stern in 1931)

S. F. Woodwind Quintet

Univ. of California Symphony Orchestra

S. F. Conservatory of Music

Little Symphony of S. F.

S. F. State College Orchestra

California Youth Symphony

CHORAL

S.F. Municipal Chorus

Oakland Chorus

S.F. Boys' Chorus

DANCE

S.F. Ballet

Ballet Celeste

Halprin-Lathrop

Dancers

Lola Montes Spanish

Dance Group

Pacific Ballet

LIGHT OPERA, MUSICAL THEATRE

S. F. Opera Ring

Oakland Light Opera Association

The Lamplighters

OPERA

Merola Fund

Western Opera Theatre

Pacific Opera Company

CONDUCTORS

Gaetano Merola

Walter Herbert

Hans Leshke

Pierre Monteux

Fritz Berens

Aaron Sten

Bruno Walter

Professor Albert Elkus

Professor Edward Lawton

Julius Haug

Kurt Herbert Adler

Charles Rosekrans

Earl Bernard Murray

Gregory Millar

Sandor Salgo

Enrique Jorda

Arthur Fiedler

Dr. Paul Freeman

HISTORY: Festival Programs (contd)

SOLO ARTISTSVOCAL

Miliza Korjus, soprano
 Kerstin Thorborg, contralto
 Dusolina Giannini, soprano
 Claramae Turner, contralto
 Gladys Steele, character songs
 Lucine Amara, soprano
 Geraldine Farrar, soprano
 Dorothy Warenskjold, soprano
 Walter Fredericks, tenor
 Florence Quartararo, soprano
 Kirstin Flagstad, soprano
 James Schwabacher, Jr., tenor
 Donald Gramm, bass-baritone
 Yi Kwi Sze, bass
 Katherine Hilgenberg, mezzo soprano
 Raymond Manton, tenor
 Donna Petersen, contralto
 Carole Larsen, soprano
 Stanley Norman, bass
 Horace Guittard, baritone
 Leona Gordon, Soprano
 Jan Pearce, tenor
 Robert Weede, baritone
 Licia Albanese, soprano
 Mary Costa, soprano
 Gwen Curatilo, soprano
 Delcina Stevenson, soprano
 Sylvia Davis, soprano

VOLUNTEER HOSTS AND EMCEES

Ken Ackerman, KCBS
 Fred Goëner, KCBS
 Jack R. Wagner, KNBR
 Keith Lockhart, KKHI
 Jack Carney, KSFO
 Bill Agee, KKHI
 Evangeline Baker, KNBR
 Al Covaia, KSFR
 Carter Smith, KSFO

INSTRUMENTAL

Maxim, Schapiro, pianist
 Leonard Pennario, pianist
 Eudice Shapiro, violinist
 Eduard Steuerman, pianist
 Amparo Iturbi, pianist
 Naoum Blinder, violinist
 Boris Blinder, cellist
 David Abel, violinist
 Samuel Lipman, pianist
 Janet Goodman, pianist
 Patricia Michaelian, pianist
 Glenn Dieterow, violinist

Alfred Frankenstein, music critic
 (narrator for "Peter and the
 Wolf")

Dave McElhatton, KCBS
 Frank Dill, KNBR
 Dan Sorkin, KSFO
 Al Collins, KSFO
 Dave Niles, KNBR
 Aaron Edwards, KSFO
 Wanda Ramey, KPIX
 Ira Blue, KGO

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PRESS QUOTES: SIGMUND STERN GROVE, MIDSUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL1938 (Opening Season Reviews)

- ".....the matinee 'mood' was peculiarly San Franciscan. The concert proved that the city yearns for good summer music. ...crowd...overflowed all seats."
 Alexander Fried, S. F. Examiner
- ".....the venture was a genuine success."
 Marjory M. Fisher, S. F. News
- "The case for outdoor music was proved to the hilt yesterday afternoon at the Sigmund Stern Recreation Grove Midsummer Musicals."
 Alfred Frankenstein, SF Chronicle
- "A bit of old Vienna came to San Francisco yesterday. With lilt and laughter it came to Sigmund Stern Recreation Grove, cupped in a hollow at Nineteenth and near the Pacific Ocean. Sparkle and gaiety pervaded the place, but very patient appreciation was accorded the orchestra when the conductor's baton was lifted. The experiment was eminently successful, a precedent and probably epoch making event, proving again that music is for the people, of and by the people."
 Marie Hicks Davidson,
 S. F. Call-Bulletin
- "A summer series that is distinctively a forward mark in newness... Designed to educate and entertain the public. Intended for all ... this is the fundamental idea underlying the project."
 from Sept. '38 Festival Program
- "If these programs have contributed to the enjoyment, happiness and well-being of those attending, the purpose of those whose efforts have made it possible will indeed have been well served."
 Josephine D. Randall,
 Superintendent
 Recreation & Park Department,
 Bulletin

Festival Press Quotes (contd.)

1940

- "...enjoyed very much the warm, human atmosphere in San Francisco, and shall keep in grateful memory the beautiful impression of these two days."

Bruno Walter

1941

- "...a privilege to work for the success of the Stern Grove. Could not possibly accept anything that had been taken from the Grove fund."

Gaetano Merola

1947

- "Music has many manifestations in San Francisco, and among those the free open air concerts given in Stern Grove beyond Twin Peaks makes, possibly, the basic contribution to development of music appreciation in the city. These programs, including symphonic concerts, operatic performances and ballets, may be considered the matriculation courses in musical appreciation because they are free and because they thus give children and uninitiated music lovers the opportunity to test music's charms without cost. If the reaction of the adult is favorable, he becomes a San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and San Francisco Opera customer. For the child, his interest in the best musical entertainment is developed."

MUSIC UNCONFIRMED, editorial, S. F. Examiner, May 5

- "The Stern Grove concerts are the only ones given hereabouts that can smell as good as they sound, thanks to the action of sunlight on wet eucalyptus trees. It was my privilege last year to attend the summer concerts of most of the country's major orchestras. The only one of the lot which has a setting at all comparable to the Stern Grove is the Boston Symphony, with its concerts at Tanglewood in the Berkshire Hills. Another thing, and a very important one, that sets the Stern Grove concerts apart is that no admission is charged for them. They have been the major factor in San Francisco's summer music for many years past..."

June 9, Alfred Frankenstein, S. F. Chronicle

- "Tradition in the making..." (Commenting on attendance per Sunday from 10,000 up). Sept. 7th, Alexander Fried, S.F. Examiner
- "The Sigmund Stern Grove Sunday concerts, light opera and ballet performances have grown in attractiveness until during the past summer season they became the magnet for thousands of San Francisco music lovers. The splended entertainment was as free as the fresh air the audience breathed."

MUSIC FREE AS AIR, editorial, S. F. Examiner, Oct. 8th

Festival Press Quotes (contd.)

1948

- "Music's summer capital."
July 14th, S. F. Chronicle

1952

- "Nature's Music Box."
July 15th, S. F. News

1953

- " 'Sunday at the Grove' is as regular a summer event for many as attendance at church. They come in social groups, in clubs, as families en masse, and alone- and always children."
July, Recreation and Park Department Bulletin
- "...a spot which, perhaps among all others is most San Francisco in its appearance, history and culture."
July 11th, KCBS Broadcast script

1963

- "The Grove has more than lived up to its expectations. There is nothing like it anywhere in this country. Thousands have the opportunity at Stern Grove to enjoy free the beauty, peace and relaxation for the entire family."
Josephine D. Randall
Retired in 1951 after 25 years as
San Francisco's Superintendent of Recreation
Deceased 1968

1964

- "Stern Grove is a truly beautiful setting. As the Examiner's Alexander Fried said, '...grassy, and woodsy banks, like a vast, colorful carpet.' We think the Stern Grove Festival Association deserves highest commendation for its summer concert series, in keeping with a place of great beauty."
Editorial, S. F. Examiner

1965

- "Ah, San Francisco's Greene Pastures, where the musical elite meet to play for the people who will eat while they hear a suite from the pen of Smetana or Bizet, and a dog might bark for a barcarolle."
California Living, S. F. Examiner

1966

- Nature's own opera house."
Dave McElhatton, KCBS

Festival Press Quotes (contd.)

1966

- "It was surprising, in so large an outdoor setting, how attentively the audience listened to Debussy's fragile, lovely 'Faun.' Paul Renzi took a bow for his fine solo flute playing."

Alexander Fried, S. F. Examiner

"There may be, somewhere, sometime, a more casual concert series than Stern Grove's Midsummer Music Festival, which opened its 28th season under the eucalyptus trees of 19th Avenue yesterday afternoon; but not hereabouts, and not in our time. Some of the audience were picnickers. Some were sunbathers. Many took off their shoes to loll under a dazzling sun while they dug their Liszt, Wagner, and Debussy."

S. F. Chronicle

"Among the great concert halls of the world one could list Berlin's for its dramatic architecture, Amsterdam's for its accoustics, and the Opera House only because it is ours. Yet one should not overlook the Sigmund Stern Grove."

Kent Kay, S. F. Chronicle

1967

- "...a lovable al fresco spot for summer music under the eucalypti."

Arthur Bloomfield, S. F. Examiner

PARTIAL INDEX -- Elise Stern Haas

Achenbach Collection of Graphics at the Legion of Honor, S.F., 109

Ackerman, Louise, 168

Adams, Ansel, 139

Alioto, Angelina [Mrs. Joseph], 173

Alioto, Joseph, 173

Altman, Mark, 140

Amara, Lucine, 85

Annenberg, Walter, 179

Adams, Mark, 182

Barnes Collection, 104, 179

Barnes, Matthew, 146

Barr, Alfred, 126, 169

Battersea Park group, 128

Beasley, 154

Bender, Albert [Micky], 15, 99-100, 138-142

Ben Dov, 62

Biran, Avram, 64

Bloch, Ernest, 67, 133-136, 141

Bloch, Suzanne, 133, 136

Blumenthal, Florence, 87

Blumenthal, George, 2, 87

Boone, Philip, 68

Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 110

Brandenstein, Agnes, 20

Brangwyn, 96

Braque, Georges, "Gueridon," 63

Brey, Doris, 125

Briggs, Dr. Roy, 77

Brunn, Dr. Harold, 77, 79

Harold Brunn Cardiovascular Research Project, 78

Bufano, Benjamin, 98

Burke, Katharine, 13, 37, 38, 41, 144

California Historical Society, 89

California School of Fine Arts, S.F., 92, 145, 174

Cézanne, Paul, 180-181

Clement, Ada, 133

Cliff House, San Francisco, 32

Coffelt, Beth, 124-125, 127

Cone Collection, 112

Cox, Mrs. E.M., 159, 167

Crocker Bank, San Francisco, 47

Crocker, Charles and Helen, 14
 Crocker, William, 164
 Culler, George, 161-163
 Cullman, Howard, 58, 60
 Cummings, Nathan, 108, 118
 Cuneo, Mrs. 173, 177

Dailey, Gardner, 29, 49-52
 Deerfield (School), 38
 Derain, André, 19, 97, 120
 de Souza-Dantas, Elise [Mrs. Luis], 87
 de Souza-Dantas, Luis, 42-43
 Duthuit, Mme. Georges, 121

earthquake, San Francisco 1906, 22-27
 Ehrman, Emma, 48-49, 67
 Ehrman, Esther, 77
 Ehrman, Theresa, 101
 Elkins, Frances, 15, 29-30, 50, 70
 Elmire, M. (deHory), 110
 Esherick, Joseph, 50

Fair Oaks [Atherton], California, 24
 homes at, 28
 Felton, Katherine, 14
 Fishbein, Dr. Morris, 79
 Flanner, Janet, 111-112, 114, 116-117
 Fleischer, Leon, 82
 Fleishhacker, Bella, 93
 Fleishhacker, Mr. & Mrs. Herbert, 31
 Ford Foundation, 45, 47
 "Four Americans in Paris," New York Museum of Modern Art, 123, 126, 169
 Frankenstein, Alfred, 124
 Friedman, James, 88
 Friedman, Dr. Meyer, v-vi, 79-80
 Fries, Dorothy, 31

Galileo High School, San Francisco, 38, 40
 Ganz, Rudolph, 83
 Giacometti, Alberto, 124
 "Gloriana," 58-59
 Godchaux, Becky, 21, 40
 Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco, 53
 Goldman, John, 47

Goldman, Rhoda Haas [Mrs. Richard], 16, 37-38, 47, 50, 76, 85, 146
 Goldman, Richard, 50
 Goldman, Rick, 47
 Goldstein, Lutie, 67
 Goldstone, Leon, 78
 Golson, Lucile, 118
 Grabhorn Press, 139
 Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 95
 Grady, Lucretia, 58
 Graham, Katherine, 10
 Guggenheim, Bert, 76, 77, 79
 Gump's [San Francisco], 103
 Gunst, Aline, 92-93
 Gunst, Carlton, 19

Haas, Bob, 39, 47
 Haas, Evelyn Danzig [Mrs. Walter, Jr.], 44-45, 123
 Haas family, forebears, 1, 9
 Haas, Josephine Baum (Jody) [Mrs. Peter], 46, 121-122
 Haas, Merle [Mrs. Robert], 115
 Haas, Peter Edgar, 36, 38-40, 46-47, 66, 76, 147
 Haas, Peter E., Jr., 47
 Haas, Robert, 111, 115
 Haas, Ruth, 31, 94
 Haas, Walter, iii-iv, 31, 33
 Haas, Walter, Jr., 34, 38, 40, 44-46, 56, 76, 147
 Hanks, Nancy, 170
 Hartwell, Marian, 92
 Harvard School of Business Administration, 38-39
 Helfrich, Prince, 54, 56
 Heller, Elinor, 143
 Heller, Mrs. E.S., 28
 Heller, Walter S., 19
 Hightower, John, 168-169
 Hodgehead, Lillian, 133
 Hopkins, Henry T., vii, 156
 hospitals, San Francisco
 Maimonides, 51
 Mt. Zion, 47, 51, 76-77
 hotel tax fund, San Francisco, 166, 172. See also Publicity and Advertising Fund
 Howe, Thomas Carr, 105, 109-110

Israel, 61-65

Jacobs, Tevis, 104, 106, 108
 Jerusalem, museum in, 63
 Jewish Federation, 47, 66
 Jewish Welfare Fund, 65

Kahn, Rosalind, 94
 Kahnweiler, Henri, 113, 123
 Kaufman, Florence, 94
 Kaufman, Meta, 94
 Keck, Mr. & Mrs. Sheldon [Caroline], 119-122, 156, 175
 Kendrick, Charles, 174
 Kendrick, Mrs. Charles, 168
 Kennedy, Pop [Charles], 88
 Kolleck, Teddy, 63-65

Lasky, Moses, 155, 173-174
 Lazard Frères, 3
 Le Corbusier, 101
 Les Genêts, 103
 Levison, Alice, 94
 Levi Strauss & Company, 46-47, 53, 85
 Levy, Harriet, 107
 Lewis, Oscar, 141
 Lieberman, Bill [William], 122-123
 Liebman, Aline, 125
 Lilienthal, Jesse, 31
 Lilienthal, Philip, 31
 Lilienthal, Teddy, 19
 Los Angeles County Museum, 180
 Lurcat tapestries, 182
 "The World Upside Down," 182

Marini, Marino, 129, 150
 "Horse," 129
 "Man on Horseback," 151
 "Nude Figure," 151
 Matisse, Henri, 89, 100-111, 114, 116, 179
 Chapel at Vence, 106
 DeHory-Matisse, 183
 "Femme au Chapeau," 104, 119, 121-129, 153, 157
 "Le Joie de Vivre," 121, 123, 126, 180
 oil sketch of, 104
 "Marguerite in Three Poses," 89
 Matisse Centennial Exhibition at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, 110
 Matisse Centennial, 1970, 121
 Pierre Matisse, portrait, 105, 109
 "Promenade des Anglais," 110
 Sarah Stein, portrait, 149
 Matisse, Jean, 121
 McFadyen and Knowles, 90
 McKinnon, Mrs. Harold, 83
 McLaren, John, 85-87
 Meir, Golda, 64-65

Mellon, Thomas, 91, 173
 Mendelsohn, Eric, 50-51
 Menuhin, Yehudi, 41, 67
 Merchant, Mr., 88
 Merola, Gaetano, 13, 84
 Meyer, Eugene, 2-4, 25, 42, 87, 143
 Meyer family, 1-11, 17, 24
 Meyer, Jacob, 1, 2, 87
 Meyer, Rabbi Martin, 33
 Monet, Claude, 19, 120
 'Mme. Monet in her Garden at Giverny,' 120
 Monteux, Pierre, 13
 Moore, Henry, 128-132, 151
 Morley, Grace McCann, 139, 157, 160-161, 165-166, 178
 Mountbatten, Earl and Countess of, 58-59
 Murison's (Miss) School, 19-51, 41
 Museum of Modern Art, New York, 113, 118-120, 169
 International Council of, 183
 Musicians Union Local 6, San Francisco, 87-88

National Gallery, Washington, D.C., 158
 Newmark, Joseph, 4-5
 Newmark, Rosa Levy [Mrs. Joseph], 5
 Nimitz, Admiral Chester W., 72
 Nomura, Rear Admiral, 72
 Nordland, Gerald, 118, 121, 158, 162-163

O'Keeffe, Georgia, 124-126
 Orloff, Chana, 97

Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 110
 Park, David, 99
 Peace Corps, 39
 Peixotto, Jessica, 14
 Pellé, Ethel, 77
 Perls, Frank, 151
 Pernoux, Mademoiselle, 106-107
 Peterson, Clifford, 157, 162
 Picasso, Pablo, 102, 104, 109, 122
 'Demoiselles d'Avignon,' 122-123
 Gertrude Stein portrait, 149
 Porter, Bruce, 29, 96, 98
 Potter, Margaret, 169
 Presidio Open Air School, San Francisco, 38, 40
 Publicity and Advertising Fund, City of San Francisco, 87-88

Red Cross, 71
 Rivera, Diego, 145-146
 Rivera, Frida [Kahlo] (Mrs. Diego), 145
 Robinson, Edward G., 180
 Rockefeller, David, 167-168
 Rosenblum, Dr. Harold, 79
 Rosenman, Dr. Ray, 79-80
 Roth, William, 162
 Ruef, Abe, 88
 Russell, Helen Crocker [Mrs. Henry P.], 70-71, 111, 164, 167-168, 177
 Russell, Madeleine Haas, 51, 68, 79, 110, 173

Salkind, Milton and Peggy, 67
 Sampson, Dr. John, 79, 96
 San Francisco Center for the Performing Arts, 190
 San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 67, 135
 San Francisco Foundation, 47
 San Francisco Museum of [Modern] Art, 94, 104, 108, 123, 139, 155
 endowment fund, 161
 "Four Americans in Paris," 176
 Fund for the Seventies, 166-167, 175
 Painting Conservation Laboratory, 121, 156
 Paper Conservation Laboratory, 156
 Rental Gallery, 159
 rental to elementary schools, 159
 role of trustee, 155
 Women's Board, 14, 123, 156, 157
 San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, 14, 85, 86, 89
 San Francisco Symphony Association, 82-83
 Children's Concerts, 82
 San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 68, 82
 Schaefer-Simmern, Henry, 93-94
 Schelling, Ernest, 82
 Schneider, Pierre, 121, 122
 Schwabacher, Albert, 55-56
 Serkin, Rudolph, 14
 Sigmund Stern Grove, 54, 68, 82, 84-90, 135
 Simon, Norton, 180
 Sinton, Edgar, 19-20, 55
 Sinton, Marian Walter [Mrs. Edgar], 19, 20, 21, 34, 95, 109
 Sloss, Louis, 19-20, 54
 Sloss, Margaret Koshland [Mrs. Louis], 20, 77
 Smith, Dr. Reginald Knight, 77
 Spanish influenza, 35-36
 Stanford University, 47
 Lucie Stern Dormitory, 148
 Stegner, Wallace, 144
 Steiglitz, Alfred, 124-125

Stein, Allan, 101
 Stein, Danny, 102-104, 113, 123
 Stein, Gertrude, 100, 102, 111-117
 Stein, Gertrude and Leo Collection, 112
 Stein, Michael, 100-102
 Stein, Rubina [Mrs. Allan], 113
 Stein, Sarah, 100-102, 107-108, 111, 116
 Stein, Sarah and Michael Collection, 112, 118, 157
 Stern, Abe and Elise, 17, 28
 Stern family, 8-13
 Stern, Isaac, 67, 81, 86
 Stern, Jacob, 28, 110
 Stern, Rosa Strauss [Mrs. David], 9
 Stern, Rosalie Meyer [Mrs. Sigmund], 1-2, 7, 11, 14, 24, 85-87, 136, 141, 143
 Stern, Sigmund, 1, 7, 10, 14
 Sterne, Maurice, 148
 Strauss, Levi, 8-9
 Sullivan, Mrs. Jerd, 177
 Sulzberger, Arthur, 44
 Sulzberger, Iphigene, 44

Temple Emanu-El, San Francisco, 95
 Tobin, Richard, 83
 Troche, Gunther, 109-110

United Bay Area Crusade, 47
 University of California, Berkeley, 38
 Ernest Bloch Lectures, 134
 Haas International Award, 80-81
 Stern Hall, 15, 147

Valentin, Kurt, 150
 Varda, Jean, 92

Wadsworth Atheneum, 175
 Walter, Bruno, 13, 87
 Walter, Florence [Mrs. John], 79
 War Memorial Board of Trustees, San Francisco, 172-174
 Wattis, Mrs. Paul, 168
 Weill, Raphael, 23
 Weizmann, Chaim, 3
 Wheeler, Monroe, 113, 123
 White, Albert, 88

Wilbur, Brayton, 104
Wollenberg, Charles, 51
Wormser, Samuel, 79
Worn, Isabella, 33, 140
Wurster, William, 16, 147

Yamagami, Thomas, 49

Zadoc-Kahn, Mr. & Mrs. [Ernestine Meyer] Leon, 2, 7
Zellerbach, Harold, 90

Harriet Siegel Nathan

Graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1941 with an A.B. in Journalism.

Was assistant women's editor and managing editor of The Daily Californian, then known as the Monarch of the College Dailies.

Prepared President Sproul's biennial report to the legislature, 1942-44; wrote advertising copy; edited house journals; served on local and state boards of the League of Women Voters, primarily in the fields of local and regional government and publications.

Returned to U.C. for a Master of Journalism degree in 1965.

Wrote for the University's Centennial Record.

Now doing research, writing, and editing for the Institute of Governmental Studies, U.C., Berkeley.

